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Official Magazine - Australia

MARCH ISSUE 2009
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REVIEWED!

F.E.A.R. 2

Alma is back, and she's badder than ever!

MASSIVE HANDS-ON!

RESIDENT EVIL 5

Toe-to-toe with the horror heavyweight!

99 GAMES YOU MUST PLAY IN 2009

OFFICIAL VERDICT!

STREET FIGHTER IV

The 10/10 comeback of the world's favourite brawler!

Gran Turismo 5 • I Am Alive • Colin McRae: DiRT 2 • BioShock 2 • God of War III • Guitar Hero: Metallica • Batman: Arkham Asylum • and more!

ISSUE 28 MARCH 2009
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DERWENT HOWARD



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FEAR ALMA AGAIN

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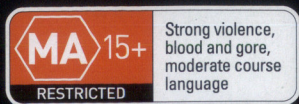
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F.E.A.R. 2

PROJECT ORIGIN™

FEBRUARY 2009



PLAYSTATION 3



Games for Windows



XBOX 360 LIVE



MONOLITH



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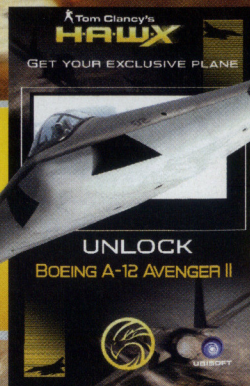
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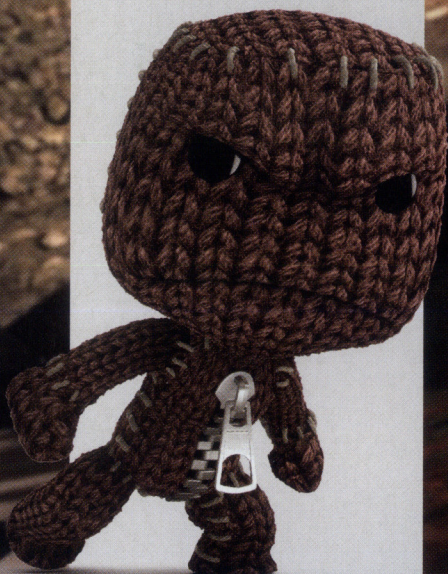


TIPS & TRICKS

Check out our list of the top 10 things you have to do in *Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots*

INSIDER

- 10 News**
All the latest info!
- 12 Screentest**
Plus Separated at Birth!
- 13 Where To Now?**
What next for *Call of Duty*?
- 14 Top Ten**
The dumbest games!
- 16 Around the World**
International news nuggets
- 17 Release Schedule**
Plus Aussie charts!
- 18 VS.**
Inverted versus normal!



“Naughty Dog has a long tradition of pushing PlayStation hardware to the limits for the past 13 years”

Naughty Dog Co-President Evan Wells

COVER STORY

52 UNCHARTED 2: AMONG THIEVES

OPS Exclusive: Evan Wells talks

ON THE COVER



14 HAWX BONUS

Get your bonus jet for *HAWX*!

48 I AM ALIVE

Ubisoft's earth-shattering adventure!

70 SF IV

The official verdict on the best beat 'em up!

74 F.E.A.R. 2

You thought it was safe to change undies?

90 BLU-RAY DISC

All the demos you can play!



SPECIAL FEATURE
56 99 GAMES
YOU MUST PLAY
IN 2009

ESSENTIAL UPDATE
38 RESIDENT EVIL 5

F.E.A.R. 2: PROJECT ORIGIN

Alma makes her comeback in the spookiest shooter this side of the new year. Does F.E.A.R. 2 have the stones to scare *Dead Space* out of the picture?

PREVIEWED

38 RESIDENT EVIL 5

The king of zombie gore is about set to make its next gen debut. Is it still as impressive as we expected?

42 EAT LEAD: THE RETURN OF MATT HAZARD

Fresh details on the gaming spoof to stick it to all those stuffed-shirt serious folk.

43 SUPERCAR CHALLENGE

First-look at the supercar racing sim built on the robust *Ferrari Challenge* engine.

44 ALPHA PROTOCOL

Essential update on SEGA's action-RPG spy 'em up hybrid.

45 IL-2 STURMOVIK: BIRDS OF PREY

Iron eagles battle it out in the skies over Europe in gigantic multiplayer dogfights!

46 THE CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK: THE ASSAULT ON DARK ATHENA

The Vin Diesel-fueled remake that has us more than a little intrigued.

47 DISGAEA 3

Turn-based Japanese RPG shenanigans make their way to PS3.

48 I AM ALIVE

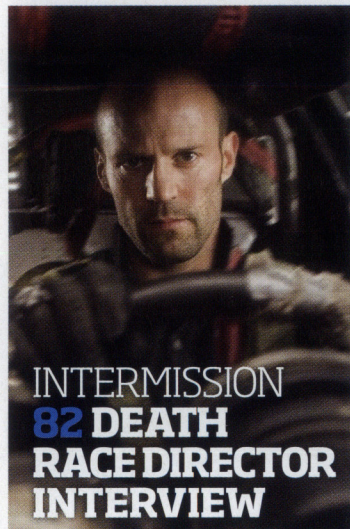
The inside scoop on Ubisoft's bold new disaster adventure!

50 SINGULARITY

Brand-new info on the exciting time-twisting shooter.

PREVIEW

46 THE CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK: THE ASSAULT ON DARK ATHENA



INTERMISSION

82 DEATH RACE DIRECTOR INTERVIEW

32 WIN!

- *Max Payne* DVD and gear
- *Babylon A.D.* DVD and watch
- Tom Clancy's *HAWX* joystick and game



REVIEWED

70 STREET FIGHTER IV

"Usually when we review a game we do less describing and more critiquing, but the problem with *Street Fighter IV* is that there's not much to criticise."

74 F.E.A.R.2: PROJECT ORIGIN

"Eric Studer, associate producer for the game... filled our heads with happy thoughts. This would not be another lousy port. In fact it's not a port at all."

76 AC/DC LIVE: ROCK BAND TRACK PACK

"There are just 18 tracks, which is testing the limits of the \$49.95 price tag, but what a gig."

78 BATTLE FANTASIA

"Far be it, then, for a fledgling little fighter like *Battle Fantasia* to deviate from a formula made genre-standard by the dragon punches and sonic booms of yore, and that it doesn't."

Are you a Hadouken, or a Hadou-can't?

STREET FIGHTER IV 70

REGULARS

- 10 INsider**
News, comedy and opinion
- 26 INbox**
Your letters answered
- 38 INcoming**
Previews of future titles
- 70 INreview**
Verdicts for the latest games
- 80 INtermission**
Blu-ray, DVD and cinema
- 84 INternet**
PSN news, online reviews
- 88 INsight**
Essential tips & tricks
- 92 INdex**
Your ultimate buyer's guide
- 96 INfamous**
Classics unearthed!

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Make sure your Boys grow
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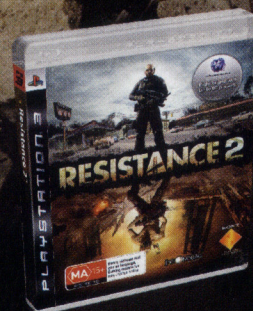
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Many of us fear change. There is, however, generally a good reason for this. There has been a great deal of change within the games industry over the past few years, and unfortunately not all of it is for the better. The biggest problem these days is it's far less risky to simply churn out some paint-by-numbers garbage. This approach is making the Wii money, but it's also changing gaming. The PS2 had around 63

games that received a critical average of over 90%. The Wii has a pathetic eight. Why are we celebrating mediocrity? Did we lose a war?

Consumers are also more fickle than ever, and are harder and harder to please. *GTAIV* remains the second-best wide-reviewed game ever made, something you could do by accident no more than I could find myself on the next moon mission, but there's still a vocal portion of current gamers who'll rip it to shreds at every given opportunity. So it's harder to make a good game, and it's harder to get people to like it. Strange times, huh?

Not all change is bad though. There have been a few changes right here at *OPS*. Editor Vanessa Morgan, the eyes and ears of *OPS*, dep ed Mark Serrels, the brains AND brawn, and long-time art director extraordinaire Phillip Jorge, the beating heart, have each found new projects to keep them occupied for now. I can't find a way of telling Phill he'll be sorely missed without it sounding like he's dead. He's not. In fact, he's sitting beside me right now. He says he's awesome. So does Mark.

But what does this mean for you? Easy. New team, new year, same aim. You love PlayStation and so do we. If you want everything you need to know about PlayStation in one handy monthly package from a team of Aussies as dedicated to gaming as you are, stick around.

LUKE REILLY
EDITOR

PSN: Capt_Flashheart **PLAYING:** KILLZONE 2 **WANTING:** ROCK BAND 2

OPS ON: CHANGE



STEPHANIE GOH

Change isn't too bad. I've changed my way into a new job. Can't complain about that! Hopefully my *World of Warcraft* addiction won't affect my performance too much.

PSN: TBA
Playing: Fallout 3
Wanting: Resident Evil 5



JAMES ELLIS

Take me to the magic of the moment, on a glory night - where the children of tomorrow dream away in the wind of change. Wait, everyone still listens to Scorpions, right?

PSN: gtaster49
Playing: Street Fighter IV
Wanting: Uncharted 2



JAMES COTTEE

Change? Change is terrible. Unless it involves me suddenly coming into a lot a money. Then it's good. I'd like to change into a rich person.

PSN: DrWho3987
Playing: Valkyria Chronicles
Wanting: Red Faction Guerrilla



ANTHONY O'CONNOR

I welcome change like a fresh pair of underwear. I welcome change every two-to-three days in that case. I'm fairly certain my associates welcome those changes also.

PSN: stoxy242
Playing: Killzone 2
Wanting: Resident Evil 5

INTRO

PlayStation®
Official Magazine - Australia

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ABC AUDIT - JAN-JUNE 08 AVERAGE NET PAID SALES OF 17,941 IN AUSTRALIA AND 985 IN NEW ZEALAND.

SHOUT OUTS: Phill, what a legend :: Mark, what a workhorse :: Vinnie :: Cottee :: Vanessa :: Rebecca Rice :: Evan Wells



Gaming's latest and greatest

BOOM OR BUST

Things are tough all over, or so they say

Is gaming immune from the world financial crisis? We'd be hesitant to say so, what with the layoffs occurring around the globe (EA, for instance, is planning to reduce its global workforce by 10%, following cuts made to its Mythic, Black Box and Tiburon developer studios – and it's not the only company doing so).

Still, there's no getting around the fact that, despite all the doom and gloom, Australia's videogame industry is not really showing any signs of an economic slowdown, recording its largest ever sales result.

Videogame sales in Australia reached a shade under \$2 billion for the calendar year. The \$1.96 billion figure is a hefty increase of 47% from 2007.

The stats, compiled by independent market research group GfK Retail and Technology Australia, revealed that sales of games software in 2008 increased 57% from the previous year, game consoles increased 43% and gaming hardware accessories lifted a colossal 68%.

According to Ron Curry, CEO of the Interactive Entertainment Association of Australia, the results illustrate the strength of Australia's video and computer gaming industry and that entire households are now getting right into games.

"Sales figures for the past two years actually show that the industry has grown over 112% since 2006. The industry has really witnessed phenomenal growth, which has largely been driven by people playing games together," Curry said.

Furthermore, Media Control GfK International shows that video game retail sales actually overtook DVD and Blu-ray for the first time last year. Video game sales grew 20%, topping \$32 billion globally, while DVD and Blu-ray increased 6% to \$29 billion.

GfK predicts international software sales will reach \$36 billion this year, an increase of 12%. It also anticipates a 4% drop in the home video market to around \$27 billion (Blu-ray is forecast to double to \$2.9 billion).



13 Where to Now?
Call of Duty, the mega-hit shooter series that can do no wrong, needs a shake up. Check out the suggestions. We want a cut if any of these have legs.



14 Top 10 Games That Insult Our Intelligence
Anybody remember *White Van Racer*? Yeah, we didn't think so. That and nine other turds are ripped to shreds here.

LEGO BATMAN: BAD FOR KIDS

Holy toledo!

US consumer watchdog group The Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood has released a list of the finalists for its annual TOADY awards (Toys Oppressive and Destructive to Young Children). Oddly enough, one of which is TT Games' *LEGO Batman*.

For the reasoning behind *LEGO Batman*'s nomination, we'll leave it to the group's website. It offers the following:

"How do you turn the ultimate creative toy into a symbol of commercialised childhood? Begin by partnering with media companies to sell that toy in branded kits designed for recreating movies like *Star Wars*, rather than creative construction. Then, dispense with hands-on building altogether by turning your toy into a video game so that instead of deciding what to build next, children choose which cyber weapons to use to beat up their opponent. Finally, ignore the fact it was rated suitable for ages 10 and up and partner with McDonald's for a Happy Meal toy giveaway to simultaneously promote the video game, junk food, and the violent Dark Knight movie series to preschoolers."

Thing is, we find ourselves agreeing with their other 'finalists'. For instance, the Power Wheels Cadillac Escalade by Fisher-Price IS ridiculous. Why do three-year-old need a battery-powered mini-SUV? If they rode a trike they wouldn't be so fat. Same goes for the Smart Cycle, also by Fisher Price. Why ride a bike in the house in front of the TV instead of, we don't know, at a park or something? In the fresh air.

But why *LEGO Batman*? We mean, of ALL the games that'd be harmful to kids? Wasn't there any Bratz games released last year? You know, the ones that teach pre-teens how to dress like hookers. Sorry, hookerz.



WHAT'S HOT OR NOT

Too hot to handle? Or too cold to hold?



Tuesday's Gone
Lynyrd Skynyrd in *GH: Metallica!*



AC/DC Live
Awesome, but looking a little lacking behind *GH: Metallica*.



Developer layoffs
Sackings suck, regardless of circumstances.



Killzone 2
We thought the beta was good, until the game arrived.



Street Fighter IV
Who can? Hadouken! That's who!



Heat
Why does it have to be so freaking hot? We're melting.



White Van Racer
Worst. Title. Ever. Hands down.

IN SHORT...



The Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences has revealed its nominees for 2008, and *LittleBigPlanet* has managed 10 category nominations, the most of any game this year.



Three new DLC packs for *Guitar Hero World Tour* are due out in February. Bob Seger's 'Old Time Rock and Roll' and Incubus' 'Drive' feature.



When asked if there were plans to patch *Fallout 3* for end-game play, Todd Howard, the game's executive producer, has responded, "Not at this time, no."

SCREENEST

CANIS CANEM EDIT

School's in

The Director
Ivan Reitman

The Plot

Jimmy Hopkins, rough nut and professional delinquent, finds himself enrolled at Bullworth – the toughest boarding school in New England. Can he survive the bullies and the jocks, take the preppies down a peg, save the nerds, avoid the bent teachers, land the girl and rule the school?



The Pitch

Harry Potter: Less magic, more fistfights.

Green Light or Development Hell?

Tough to say. You could change the name back to *Bully*, or nobody will ever watch it. Obviously, if pre-production languishes too long, your child actors hit puberty, learn to drive and spend most nights mainlining Jägermeister and doing blow from the chests of sweaty groupies. At this point you need to wait until they fade away into obscurity and replace them with younger models. Still, it would probably be a good moneyspinner; movies about kids standing up to bullies are a tried and tested concept. We're giving this the green light, but we'd be prepared for it to be a bit disappointing.



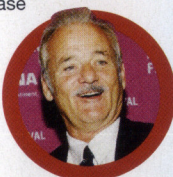
Best Line:

Russell Northrop: Russell likes to hurt people... for peace.



The Cast:

Freddie Highmore as child hardcase Jimmy Hopkins



Miley Cyrus as Jimmy's best girl Zoe Taylor



Bill Murray as slightly wacky headmaster Dr. Crabblesnitch



Will Ferrell as panty-sniffing PE teacher Mr. Burton



VChevy Chase as drunken English teacher Mr. Galloway



FIGHT FIRE WITH FIRE

Metallica has revealed the full setlist for *Guitar Hero: Metallica* and, as much as we love the recently released *AC/DC Live: Rock Band Track Pack*, there's no denying this is a truly colossal music game.

Their official site has unveiled all 28 Metallica tracks they will be contributing to the game (the PS2 version will include three extra songs in lieu of access to the band's *Death Magnetic* DLC pack). They've also revealed a further 21 tracks from, in their words, "some of the bands we admire and even call friends." The latter include some tracks easily as strong as the main Metallica offering, including Alice In Chains 'No Excuses', Bob Seger 'Turn The Page', Foo Fighters 'Stacked Actors', Lynyrd Skynyrd 'Tuesday's Gone', Motörhead 'Ace of Spades', Queen 'Stone Cold Crazy', System of a Down 'Toxicity', Thin Lizzy 'The Boys Are Back in Town' and a large haul of metal.

Check out the list of Metallica tracks here (included because anybody keen will be aching to know). *Guitar Hero: Aerosmith*, eat your heart out.

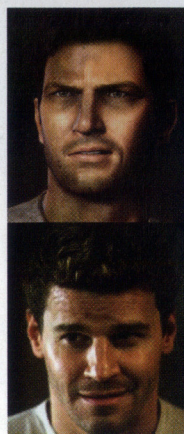
- * All Nightmare Long
- * Battery
- * Creeping Death
- * Disposable Heroes
- * Dyers Eve
- * Enter Sandman
- * Fade To Black
- * Fight Fire With Fire
- * For Whom The Bell Tolls
- * Frantic
- * Fuel
- * Hit The Lights
- * King Nothing
- * Master of Puppets
- * Mercycful Fate (Medley)
- * No Leaf Clover
- * Nothing Else Matters
- * One
- * Orion
- * Sad But True
- * Seek And Destroy
- * The Memory Remains
- * The Shortest Straw
- * The Thing That Should Not Be
- * The Unforgiven
- * Welcome Home (Sanitarium)
- * Wherever I May Roam
- * Whiplash



NUMBER CRUNCHING

91%

of Australian adults think Australia should have an R18+ rating category for videogames.



SEPARATED AT BIRTH

NO. 1 You can't fake the Drake. Or can you? - David Boreanaz

Same rakish looks, same tussled hair, same designer stubble – man, David Boreanaz IS Nathan Drake. They even have the same yeah-I-know-I-look-good-in-this-T-shirt-your-sister-left-her-undies-at-my-place-could-you-come-and-get-them attitude. Boreanaz narrowly beat out that Nathan Fillion guy from *Serenity* as our Drake lookalike of choice.

CALL OF DUTY: GIVE PEACE A CHANCE

EXPLAIN YOURSELF...

Why do these games have to be so violent? You can't fix everything by blowing up everyone who disagrees.

THE STORY

Taking the advice from bleeding heart commies worldwide, travel to international hotspots and attempt to bring an end to conflict with words instead of action. You will be shot... Often.

HOW WILL IT PLAY?

Press the button to smile, and the button to wave politely. raises a white flag, while throws a kitten. Use and to toggle kittens.

PROBABILITY

Not gonna happen. They say violence doesn't really solve anything, and they may be right. Unfortunately you can't have a first-person shooter without it.

CALL OF DUTY: VIETNAM

HOW WILL IT PLAY?

Exactly like COD4, only with more Hendrix and Creedence Clearwater Revival. Seriously, you wouldn't have to change much. Just swap the sand for jungle, and trade the AC-130 for a 1970s model.

PROBABILITY

This has to be a sure bet. Replace the Black Hawks with Hueys and you're halfway there. We've had WWII, we've had 'Modern Combat' – how about a new era?

THE STORY

A US, South Vietnamese and Australian campaign would have you doing everything from defending the LZ in La Drang Valley as US 1st Cavalry to scouring the jungle as Australian SASR.

WHERE TO NOW?

Call of Duty, the bullet to the head of *Medal of Honor*, has redefined much of what we expect from realistic first-person shooters. If we're gonna have one every year, however, we need to keep things fresh. Here are some ideas.

CALL OF DUTY: HAIL TO THE CHIEF

EXPLAIN YOURSELF...

Surely it's only a matter of time before we get the *Call of Duty* real-time strategy spin-off? It happened with the Tom Clancy series. Hell, even *Army Men* had an RTS spin-off. Shudder...

THE STORY

Take charge as the President of the US of A and kick-start a war of on terror that'll get the whole world talking. And taking cover.

PROBABILITY

A *Call of Duty* RTS? Probably not out of the question really. As we've described it though? Our magic 8-ball says don't bet on it.

HOW WILL IT PLAY?

Point and click, baby. Throw waves of poor kids and minorities into the desert and instruct them to shoot anybody suspicious looking. Salute as the coffins are flown back into the country.

EXPLAIN YOURSELF...

We'd thought we'd chuck this in for a little local flavour. Besides, readers are always badgering us for a game that pays tribute to the heroes of Gallipoli. For future reference? We don't make games, we just criticise them.

HOW WILL IT PLAY?

You'll mostly be sitting around in a trench taking pot shots. You'd also be able to throw tins of food at each other during Christmas. They used to do that when war was a little more civilised.

CALL OF DUTY: GALLIPOLI

THE STORY

Commonwealth troops spend the best part of a year (April 1915 to January 1916) stuck on a Turkish peninsula where there's a better than average chance dying or catching dysentery (not necessary in that order).

PROBABILITY

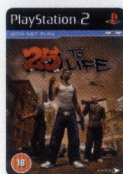
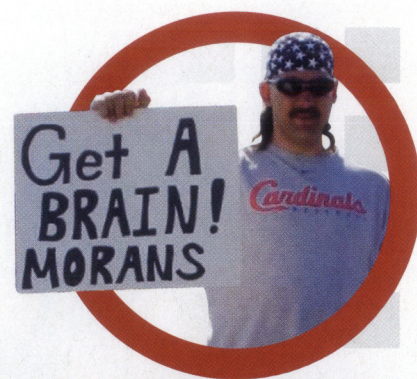
Yeah, unlikely. Besides, you all heard the uproar when *Call of Duty* went back to World War II – can you imagine how loud all those pansies would moan if it went back even further?



TOP 10 GAMES THAT INSULT OUR INTELLIGENCE

BEWARE SPOILERS AHEAD!

There's no getting around it, but there are some games that just make us want to punch a baby. Either they're too stupid, or they think we're too stupid – either way they're just insulting. Here are our top ten, in no particular order to be honest. Each one of these has driven us mad in one way or another.



1 125 TO LIFE

This game didn't just insult our intelligence, it insulted everybody

full stop. The most ridiculously racist game we've ever had the displeasure of playing.



2 DIE HARD TRILOGY 2

The mathematics of this never sat

well with us. It's the 'sequel' to *Die Hard Trilogy*, sure. But *Die Hard Trilogy 2* isn't actually a trilogy at all, and is thus a cock-up of a name.



3 THIS IS SOCCER 2005

Or is it? The TIF logo remains, which means *This is Football*. But

this isn't football anymore? Do we all look stupid? Change it the whole thing, or don't change it at all.



4 PRINCE OF PERSIA

If we're getting the chilli-on-a-stick treatment from a nasty

big bad guy, let us die. Otherwise, where's the tension? It's like riding a bike with training wheels.



5 WHITE VAN RACER

Nevermind you're too lazy to even name your game with any creativity

whatsoever; we're sure that this couldn't-be-arsed attitude hasn't affect the game itself. Not.



6 THE FLINTSTONES BEDROCK BOWLING

A terrible, terrible game where, at some point, it was obviously decided by some sort of committee of stuffed suits that you could never, ever fail during it. Rubbish.



7 PILOT DOWN: BEHIND ENEMY LINES

Look closely. Did you guys just put the US 101st Airborne patch on your British pilot because it looked cool? Paratroopers, pilots – whatever. Read a damn book!



8 CRAZY FROG RACER 2

The thing that offends us most is the '2' on the end. Are you

telling us enough people bought the first one to warrant a sequel? Who are these douchebags? Please, go away.



9 SRS: STREET RACING SYNDICATE

SRS: Street Racing Syndicate? Do

you need both the acronym AND what it stands for? Doesn't that defeat the purpose? We're off to play *GTA: Grand Theft Auto*.



10 HOME ALONE

"You are home alone!" That was the first line of the blurb on the back of this turd. Cheers for the clarification, guys. We forgot what *Home Alone* was about. It was such a complex film.

Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X SPECIAL OFFER

Ubisoft is giving every Official PlayStation reader the chance to unlock an exclusive plane for **Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X**.

To get your exclusive F18 HARV (Boeing), Enter the code inside the Hangar: (HOLD L2) L1, △ L1, △ L1, □

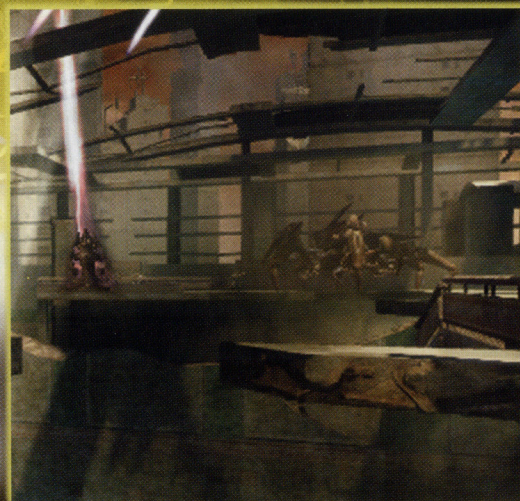
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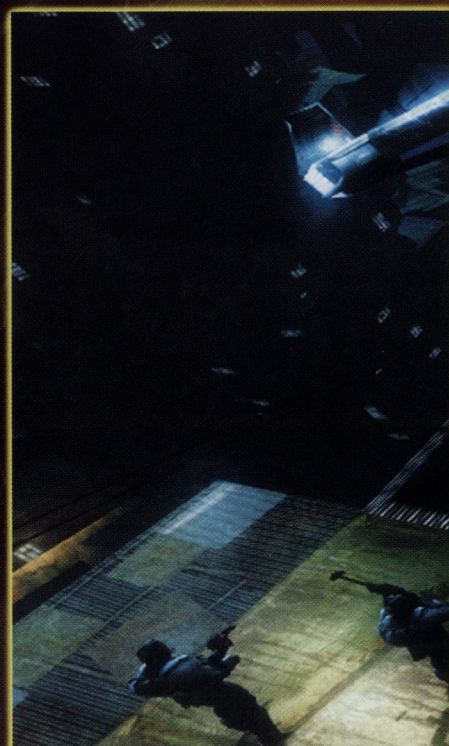


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PLAYSTATION 3



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AROUND THE WORLD IN PS3

OPS trawls high and low for what's going on around the globe in gaming



INTERNATIONAL CHARTS



UK

Source: ELSPA

- | | | |
|----|----------------------------|------------|
| 1 | Call of Duty: World at War | Activision |
| 2 | FIFA 09 | EA |
| 3 | Need for Speed: Undercover | EA |
| 4 | LittleBigPlanet | Sony |
| 5 | Far Cry 2 | Ubisoft |
| 6 | Prince of Persia | Ubisoft |
| 7 | Fallout 3 | Bethesda |
| 8 | Resistance 2 | Sony |
| 9 | Guitar Hero: World Tour | Activision |
| 10 | Quantum of Solace | Activision |



JAPAN

Source: VGChartz

- | | | |
|----|----------------------------|--------------|
| 1 | White Knight Chronicles | Sony |
| 2 | Gran Turismo 5 Prologue | Sony |
| 3 | Gundam Musou 2 | Namco Bandai |
| 4 | Winning Eleven 2009 | Konami |
| 5 | LittleBigPlanet | Sony |
| 6 | Samurai Dou 3 | Spike |
| 7 | Grand Theft Auto IV | Capcom |
| 8 | Ryu ga Gotoku Kenzan! | SEGA |
| 9 | Need for Speed Undercover | EA |
| 10 | FIFA 09 World Class Soccer | EA |



USA

Source: NPD

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------|------------|
| 1 | Call of Duty: World at War | Activision |
| 2 | Madden NFL 09 | EA |
| 3 | LittleBigPlanet | Sony |
| 4 | Guitar Hero: World Tour | Activision |
| 5 | Resistance 2 | Sony |
| 6 | Prince of Persia | Ubisoft |
| 7 | Uncharted: Drake's Fortune | Sony |
| 8 | Rock Band 2 | EA |
| 9 | Mortal Kombat vs DC Universe | Midway |
| 10 | Sonic Unleashed | SEGA |

RELEASE SCHEDULE

Coming soon to a store near you...

JANUARY 2009

- PS3**
The Lord of the Rings: Conquest
GENRE: ACTION | DISTRIBUTOR: EA
- PS3**
Skate 2
GENRE: SPORTS | DISTRIBUTOR: EA
- PS3**
SOCOM: Confrontation
GENRE: ACTION | DISTRIBUTOR: SONY
- PS3**
Battle Fantasia
GENRE: FIGHTING | DISTRIBUTOR: SONY

FEBRUARY 2009

- PS3**
X Blades
GENRE: ACTION | DISTRIBUTOR: THQ
- PS3**
Killzone 2
GENRE: SHOOTER | DISTRIBUTOR: SONY
- PS3**
50 Cent: Blood on the Sand
GENRE: ACTION | DISTRIBUTOR: THQ
- PS3**
Street Fighter IV
GENRE: FIGHTING | DISTRIBUTOR: TBC
- PS3**
The Wheelman
GENRE: ACTION | DISTRIBUTOR: TBC
- PS3**
Silent Hill: Homecoming
GENRE: HORROR | DISTRIBUTOR: ATARI
- PS3**
Sacred 2: Fallen Angel
GENRE: RPG | DISTRIBUTOR: TBC
- PS3**
Tom Clancy's HAWX
GENRE: FLIGHT | DISTRIBUTOR: UBISOFT

MARCH 2009

- PS3**
Bionic Commando
GENRE: ACTION | DISTRIBUTOR: TBC
- PS3**
Damnation
GENRE: ACTION | DISTRIBUTOR: ATARI



- PS3**
F.E.A.R. 2 Project Origin
GENRE: SHOOTER | DISTRIBUTOR: WB

- PS3**
Resident Evil 5
GENRE: HORROR | DISTRIBUTOR: TBC

- PS3**
Dynasty Warriors 6: Empires
GENRE: ACTION | DISTRIBUTOR: THQ

- PS3**
Dynasty Warriors Gundam 2
GENRE: ACTION | DISTRIBUTOR: THQ

- PS3**
WWE Legends of WrestleMania
GENRE: FIGHTING | DISTRIBUTOR: THQ

EARLY 2009

- PS3**
Darksiders: Wrath of War
GENRE: ACTION | DISTRIBUTOR: THQ

- PS3**
The Godfather II
GENRE: ACTION | DISTRIBUTOR: EA

- PS3**
I Am Alive
GENRE: ACTION | DISTRIBUTOR: UBISOFT

- PS3**
Infamous
GENRE: ACTION | DISTRIBUTOR: SONY

- PS3**
MAG (Massive Action Game)
GENRE: ACTION | DISTRIBUTOR: SONY

- PS3**
This is Vegas
GENRE: ACTION | DISTRIBUTOR: TBC

- PS3**
UFC 2009 Undisputed
GENRE: SPORTS | DISTRIBUTOR: THQ

TBC 2009

- PS3**
Afro Samurai
GENRE: ACTION | DISTRIBUTOR: ATARI

- PS3**
Alien: Colonial Marines
GENRE: SHOOTER | DISTRIBUTOR: SEGA

- PS3**
Alpha Protocol
GENRE: RPG | DISTRIBUTOR: SEGA

- PS3**
Avatar
GENRE: ACTION | DISTRIBUTOR: UBISOFT

- PS3**
Batman: Arkham Asylum
GENRE: ACTION | DISTRIBUTOR: ATARI

- PS3**
Bayonetta
GENRE: ACTION | DISTRIBUTOR: SEGA

- PS3**
BioShock 2
GENRE: SHOOTER | DISTRIBUTOR: 2K

- PS3**
Borderlands
GENRE: SHOOTER | DISTRIBUTOR: 2K

- PS3**
Dark Void
GENRE: ACTION | DISTRIBUTOR: TBC

- PS3**
DC Universe Online
GENRE: ACTION | DISTRIBUTOR: SONY

- PS3**
Gran Turismo 5
GENRE: RACING | DISTRIBUTOR: SONY

- PS3**
Eat Lead
GENRE: ACTION | DISTRIBUTOR: AFA

- PS3**
Fight Night Round 4
GENRE: SPORTS | DISTRIBUTOR: EA

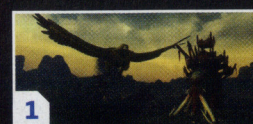
- PS3**
Final Fantasy XIII
GENRE: RPG | DISTRIBUTOR: UBISOFT

- PS3**
Ghostbusters
GENRE: ACTION | DISTRIBUTOR: ATARI

- PS3**
God of War III
GENRE: ACTION | DISTRIBUTOR: SONY

AUSTRALIAN CHARTS

Source: GfK



1 Lord of the Rings Conquest



2 Resistance 2



3 Grand Theft Auto IV



4 Call of Duty: World at War



5 LittleBigPlanet



6 Need for Speed Undercover



7 MotorStorm Pacific Rift



8 FIFA 09



9 Far Cry 2



10 Saints Row 2

QUOTE UNQUOTE

Industry chatter, inside tips and loose lips



MGS creator
Hideo
Kojima

"We're currently reviewing everything – from the team structure to tools and our staff – in order to make Kojima Productions a team that can challenge foreign creators and software houses."



Quantic
Dream boss
David Cage

"I don't think we do anything worse than what you see on TV at eight o'clock at home."



Global
President
of 2K
Christoph
Hartmann

"For *BioShock*, because it's so story driven, the question obviously arises: how long can you do it without turning into *The Matrix*? The first *Matrix* was great, the second one was weird and the third one, you thought: 'Who is on crack and who isn't?'"



David Reeves,
the president
of Sony's
European
branch

"The most important thing for us as a company in the very short term is for us to start making money. This is a pledge that was made last March and is something that we are still very much on target to achieve."

OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION
LUKE REILLY

GAMEPLAYER.COM.AU
ADAM MATHEW

VS

Inverted versus normal. Or uninverted. If that's even a word (which we're not convinced it is). It's an ongoing debate. It's also a source of much frustration, particularly around here, where controllers get passed around constantly. Is there one true answer to this age-old problem? Can you even argue about this stuff? We found out: probably not. On both counts. **FIGHT!**

LUKE: There is nothing I hate more than having to jump into the options screen, find where the developer has hidden the 'Invert Aim' option, toggle it and then back out again. Either developers do more of that intelligent stuff like asking you to look up or down first thing, and detecting what you did to activate inverted aim automatically, or all you uninverted chumps learn how to play shooters properly.

ADAM: What's this? Are you truly one of the 'vertically challenged'? Respect levels for Reilly: faltering. Seriously dude, you're the reason I have to lose ten seconds of game time by pausing and un-ticking that fricken option in *Resistance 2*. By my calculations [taps on calculator] you owe me a good three-and-a-half minutes of my life. I demand monetary reparations; and we need to have a quick intervention for you. The control path you've chosen is wrong. WROOONG.

LUKE: Wrong? I suppose you're going to give me the usual up is up, down is down malarky.

ADAM: Maybe.

LUKE: I thought so.

ADAM: Well, what's wrong with that. As far as I can tell that makes perfect sense.

LUKE: Sure it does.

ADAM: What do you mean, "Sure it does"? Sure it does!

LUKE: Come on, that doesn't fly. When I look up, my head goes back, and so does my thumb. Look down, head goes forward, so does thumb. Head go back, stick go back. Head go forward, stick go forward.

ADAM: What am I, five-years-old?

LUKE: You're living in the past you caveman. I'll tell you what you could use that three-and-a-half minutes for. It's something you can do by yourself.

ADAM: Y'see, there's your whole topsy-turvy, upside-down thinking again. Three minutes isn't nearly enough time to go Han Solo on the Wookiee – any shmuck can sprint, only the truly skilled can complete that day-long marathon. Getting back on

topic, though, all first-person shooters recreate the EYES of the character, not the balancey juices (it's a medical term) in his head. Eyeballs up, stick up. Eyeballs down, stick down. This is shootin' people, man! Not flying planes in *HAWX*.

LUKE: Surely it's not always eyes?

ADAM: Why not?

LUKE: Well, that doesn't make sense. Surely then deathmatches would be full of blokes with stiff necks flicking their eyes around?

ADAM: Meh.

LUKE: Well, what about people who invert the X axis – you know, left and right? How do you explain those weirdos? To look left, push the stick right? It's like your trying to drive an RC car towards yourself. That one has never made sense to me.

ADAM: Woah, did you feel that? We both just stepped onto common ground. While I can see the inverted Y as an "I was born left-handed and wicked" kind of thing, I can't even imagine what kind

of mental decathlete plays his games X axis reversed. What is THAT guy doing? Playing the game on his head looking at his TV screen through a mirror? We should identify those particular gamers so that we can either eradicate them from the gene pool, or reverse engineer their brains. Once that system is in place we will then re-educate all the other 'generation Y inverties'. Like you. Listen to the bell Reilly – it tolls for thee.

LUKE: I've already gone and changed all the FPS save files on the PS3 to inverted, just to screw with you.

ADAM: Curse your rat-like cunning, invertebrate. To counter your first strike I have just randomly selected some of our DualShock 3s, opened them up and physically reversed the polarity of the right analogue sticks. Now up will forever be... uh... up. Yet... down will be software configured to be... up. Hmmm... divide by six, add the remainder... carry the one – shitballs.

LUKE: You should have inverted that.

ADAM: Bah.

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PLAYSTATION 3



XBOX 360 LIVE



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OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION
ANTHONY O'CONNOR

CRIMES AGAINST GAME-MANITY

The term 'next gen' has become so ubiquitous it's lost all meaning. Every time someone spots a tasty texture, realistic water/fire/blood effect or particle based environmental explosion, the shambling hordes roar, "NEXT GEN!" And then, possibly: "Braaaaaains!"

Next generation gaming should be about more than improved graphics, audio and animation. It should be about a completely immersive experience. One that makes you forget you're playing a game.

Perhaps next gen is about leaving behind the giggles, mild irritants and hair-pulling, scalp-bashing, deal-breaking turfdests from games past. With that in mind here are some gaming elements we'd like to see 'meet with an unfortunate accident'.

First, invisible walls. If you want to make a linear, on rails, one-path-only style of game that's fine. But don't give me a huge, lush, jungle map and expect me to stay on the boring path. I wish to leap and dance amongst the flowers, to chase monkeys and throw my poo at them! At the very least let me have a quick gander at a panda or something similar. And sometimes the walls aren't just invisible, they're actually deadly. *Star Wars: The Force Unleashed* features a junk planet level where some bits of junk are okay to jump on, whereas other – identical looking – bits of junk are 'not okay'. They'll kill you. Gee, rad.

Illogical re-spawns are another pet hate. Look, I get the need to respawn – but let the respawn fit the game. In *Spider-Man: Web of Shadows* the baddies respawn from specific birthing pods. Pods you can destroy. That's fine. However, in a realistic, day/night cycle, sandboxer like *Far Cry 2* it's a bit bloody rich when you destroy a checkpoint full of antagonists, blow the Christ out of the buildings and then, when you drive back that way they've somehow resurrected themselves and rebuilt the shacks! Come on, this is a game with a time cycle. At least make it 12

game hours later or something.

How about bloodless, vanishing bodies? This is one that really gives me the shits. You kill a guy – blood spurts out – and the cat goes down. When I walk up to that corpse I want to see a big red hole where my big lead bullet went into him. I certainly don't want to see a bloodless corpse, and if you make that bloody body vanish I will glass you. *Far Cry 2* is just bizarre. Blood jets out of your target as you shoot them but the bodies are bereft of claret. Even more vexing: when you shoot the corpse a bullet hole appears... and then heals! Seriously, check it out: the bullet hole actually shrinks to nothing. Not cool.

Want more? How about lengthy and/or inaccurate cut scenes? Haven't we moved on from this yet? *Metal Gear Solid 4* is probably the biggest offender here. As the talky-talky sequences are boring as bat shit, but the action ones are quite good: trouble is you do things in the cut scene that you can't do in the game proper.

Also if I'm holding the flamethrower I want my character in the cut scene to be holding the flamethrower.

Lastly, we guess, we need to host a meeting of all the game developers and they all need to agree on a control system. As reviewers we play a lot of FPSs and it gets confusing – and annoying – when a button is shoot in one game, duck in another and throw grenade in a third. Stop trying to be arbitrarily different. Just make the controls generic and spend more time honing an awesome game.

Because when all's said and done – next gen, previous gen or current gen – we just want awesome games.

Anthony O'Connor is a veteran videogames freelancer. Aside from writing about games he's written for various film and softcore porn magazines. Oh, he also wrote the 2000 Australian comedy *Angst*.

“ [I]f I'm holding the flamethrower I want my character in the cut scene to be holding the flamethrower ”



PSP

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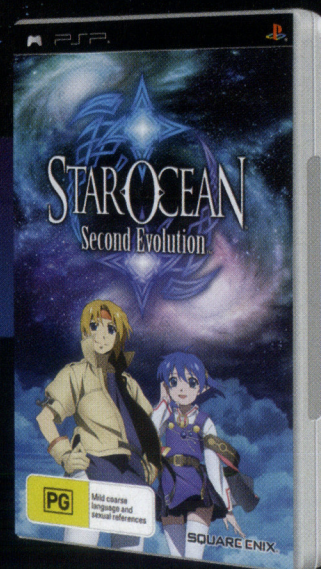
THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

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PG

Mild coarse
language and
sexual references

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OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION
ANGRY SACKBOY

WII ARE NOT AMUSED

“Wii Sports makes me wonder why I even play games in the first place”

I read with considerable disinterest recently that *Wii Sports* just may have gone and become the “best-selling videogame of all time.”

Now your average Nintendo devotee will likely see this kind of malarky as some kind of personal victory – like footy fanatics using the first-person, plural personal pronoun “we” to place

themselves inside a team of highly-trained, incredibly-dedicated athletes that consistently win games without said fanatics actual involvement. With sports, however, this is the done thing.

But it just doesn’t sound right, does it? *Wii Sports*. Best-selling game ever.

Good grief. Thank Christ it’s not true.

Before I’m drowned in a shower of saliva from the Wii-lovers you may or may not be showing this column to, sorry, but, no, it’s not true.

Why? Because the best-selling game of all time can’t be one Nintendo gives away for free to anyone who buys a Wii (excluding Japan). It’s that simple. You can’t even buy it separately in this country. Can a game you can’t buy be the best-selling ever? I think not.

No. If you were right, I’d agree with you.

Problem is, history won’t see it that way. Think of the fallout here. If Nintendo keeps bundling *Wii Sports* with its console this ‘lead’ is only going to grow. We’re faced with the terrifying possibility that in a decade’s time our kids will be looking back to find the best-selling videogame of all time is still *Wii Sports*.

This, I’m sorry, is bloody embarrassing.

Equate this to the film industry. The most-successful film of all time is *Titanic*. Sure, it wasn’t for everyone, but it won 11 Oscars. It didn’t do that by accident. Gamers bang on about how gaming ought to be taken as seriously as film all the time. *Wii Sports* being our *Titanic* shows the world we’re not ready.

Imagine what would’ve happened if *Titanic* had been usurped by, I don’t know, *Snow Dogs*. Or any movie starring Cuba Gooding, Jr. since he forgot how to act. Like that one on the boat. Or the one he replaced Eddie Murphy in. People would’ve burned down cinemas. Margaret and David would’ve hung up their coats.

The worst thing Sony ever did was not packaging a decent game with the PS2 for the lifecycle of the console. Think about that. Spotty fanboys and

industry types alike are clambering over one another to give Nintendo a courtesy reach-around for taking gaming to the masses with the rot-you-teeth cutesy-sweet Wii – all the while forgetting Sony already did that with the PS2. The best-selling videogame console, ever.

But that wouldn’t fly. 120 million plus copies of *FantaVision* sold? Nice try, Sony – but you can’t claim that. You were giving it away, would be the smug reaction from an international alliance of elitists. Nintendo though? Nope, those guys get a free pass.

Wii Sports makes me wonder why I even play games in the first place. A bunch of wrist-waving minigames with a controller Nintendo are about to sell you something to attach to it to make it do what I thought it did in the first place.

So what’s really the best-selling videogame of all time? One that people didn’t get for free. Oh. *Pokemon Red/Green/Blue*.

God, this just gets worse and worse. I’m going to go and play *Uncharted*.

Angry Sackboy is an ex-videogame journalist with a bone to pick. His views do not necessarily match those of OPS. Not always, anyway.

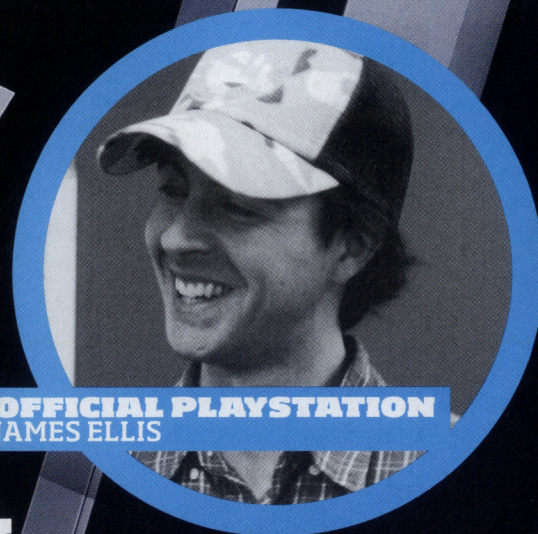
DON'T TURN A NIGHT OUT

70 Australians under 25 will be hospitalised
due to alcohol-caused assault in an average week.

www.australia.gov.au/drinkingnightmare

INTO A NIGHTMARE

PLAYSTATION 3

OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION
JAMES ELLIS

LOVE, JUDE LAW, AND SYSTEM UPDATES

You'd swear it's love. There's something that rockets her beyond the sweaty tail you ogle each day on the beach bus. She's perfect in a personal way, her flaws charming idiosyncrasies. More than that, she gets you. And you get her. You've bided your time. Waited for the moment when you're both alone. Then go for the kiss.

And get completely murdered.

If you're lucky you'll cop the Tiger Buddha strike to the nose and your eyes will be too fogged up to notice her look of repulsion as she hands you the friend card. Listen carefully and you may even hear the pop of one of your testicles imploding – it's called Spontaneous Castration – and you'll never recover.

This has happened to just about everyone born without the granite cheekbones of David Beckham or the I've-banged-your-sister smile of Jude Law. It's a universal experience, a rite of passage up there with chicken pox and your first car ding.

As PlayStation owners we're not immune to these sorts of universal maladies either. One common spike that would've pricked everyone at one time is the System Updates. It's not so much that they're released willy nilly throughout the year, or that each version includes a couple of anaemic updates that mean squat for most (the new version 2.60 comes with Photo Gallery. Awesome... if you don't have a computer).

It's that, at 130MB, they're bloody massive.

Compared to a one-plus gigabyte demo it might be small, but it's not

a demo. It's not something you can download in the background or at your leisure. There's no choice at all. If you want to play online, this pipe blockage has to be sucked down on the spot. When finding a spare few moments to jump online with a friend, who wants to fart around for twenty minutes and log onto a computer to search for the update file (typically *much* faster than downloading it through the system), download it, then wait for the lengthy install? Playtime might be limited to 40 minutes to start with. What's more, while you might have a connection that rivals the Pentagon's, the friends you're playing may not.

Prior to their wanky new dashboard, Xbox updates came out bi-yearly and fit on the machine's tiny internal memory. They were over in moments. When said wanky new dashboard was released a few months ago – which completely overhauled the console's user interface – it was still smaller than the usual token PS3 update.

Will things get better? Hopefully. At this stage, however, the only course of action is to fork out for better connections or become proficient at shoulder shrugging. Regardless, persevering with such shortfalls is our only option if we want to take advantage of future puffy-chested releases like *Killzone 2* and *Gran Turismo 5*.

You'd swear it's love.

James Ellis is a long-term PlayStation freak and a battle-hardened contributor to OPS for many years. Right now he's probably playing *Street Fighter IV*.

“ [W]hile you might have a connection that rivals the Pentagon's, the friends you're playing may not ”

WE HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR BUT F.E.A.R. ITSELF...

Alma

F.E.A.R. 2: Project Origin, sequel to the ground breaking F.E.A.R., will terrify you; it will leave your skin crawling, your heart beating like a freight train, and your soul quivering.

But above and beyond the scares, Project Origin is simply a fantastically conceived video game, one that pushes the boundaries not only of story telling, but enemy AI, and the way the player can interact with the game's environment.

Which basically means that not only will enemies duck behind cover to avoid your vicious onslaught, they'll actually create cover for themselves, by moving furniture, flipping up tables, utilizing the environment to help ensure their survival.

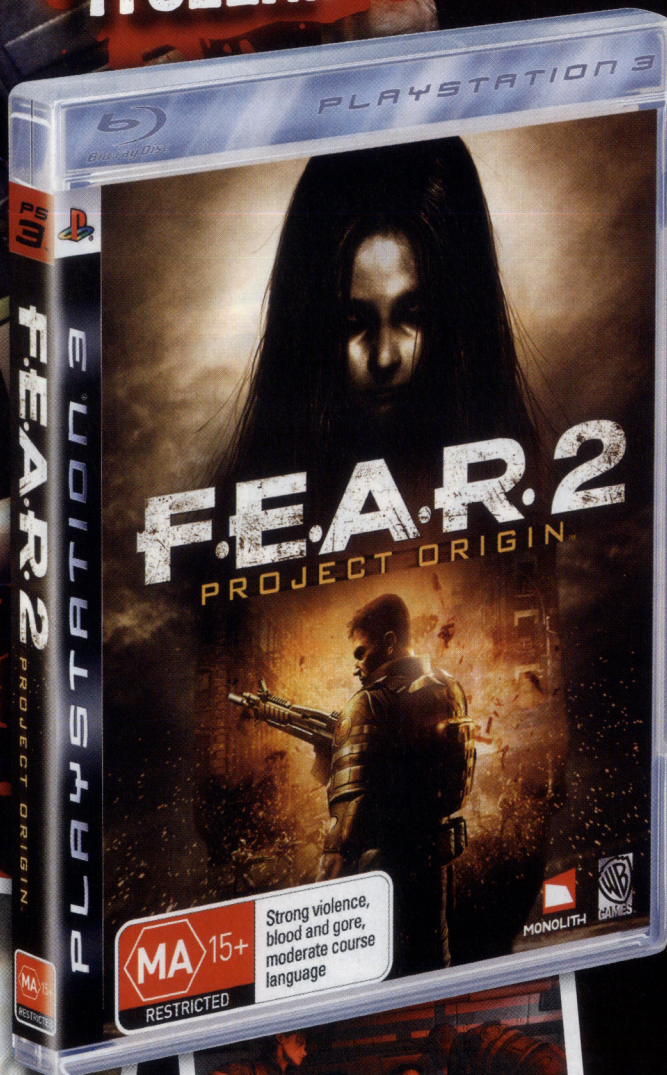
And then there's Alma, the terrifying paranormal menace manifest as a ghostly, faceless young child. Making her return in Project Origin, Alma is the source of all F.E.A.R.'s terrifying encounters and, by progressing through the story, players will uncover many of the disturbing secrets behind her grotesque existence.

We have **5 copies** of this fantastic game to giveaway, and all you have to do to enter is answer one simple question:

In 25 words or less, tell us what keeps you up at night?

**GAMEPLAYER CODE WORD:
WARNER**

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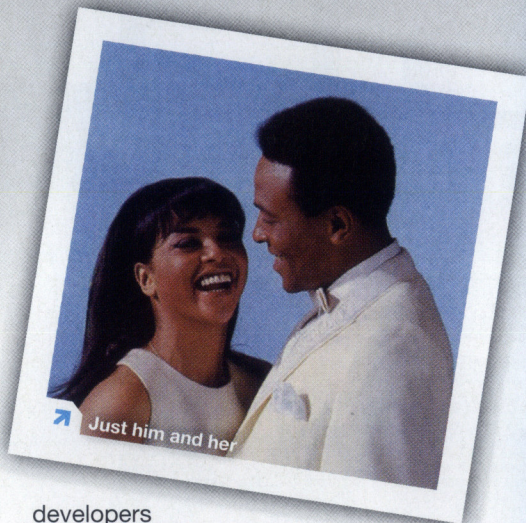
LETTER OF THE MONTH!

IT TAKES TWO BABY!

My brother and me share a PS3, so we're always playing it together. Our problem is though, that we can rarely play it at the same time. You'd think that decent co-operative gameplay in games would be a lot more common than it actually is. Recently we've seen some top class titles that could have implemented some sort of co-operative component to the story/campaign/career mode, but didn't. For example, in *Uncharted*, either Elena or Sully follow you around for at least half the game, doing all the same stuff that you do.

Why didn't Naughty Dog include an option for a second player to control these characters at certain times? Even *Motorstorm: Pacific Rift*, a racing game, could have included a co-op option where either player could finish in the top three to progress, but it doesn't. The same goes in many other genres: shooters, sports, RPGs, fighting games. Co-op must not however, dominate a game so much that it destroys the game (*Army of Two*, anyone?) by offering pointless objectives simply because they involve two players. With that said, a lot of games would not work with co-op, but a lot would. But there is light at the end of the tunnel.

We should praise Insomniac for dedicating a whole campaign to co-op in *Resistance 2*, which works seamlessly (now I just need to wait for some time away from my brother to get stuck into the single player campaign)! The *Call of Duty* franchise has included co-op for the first time in *World at War*, and *Killzone 2* is lurking right around the corner. Let's hope



developers can keep the momentum going and keep thinking of innovative new ways to appeal to the co-op hungry market.

Xavier, via email

It's a good point you make here Xavier (what an awesome name you have, mate). We reckon that one of the great tragedies in this generation of console gaming is the fact that developers have somehow allowed splitscreen gaming to get lost in the mix. For us, splitscreen gaming represents a real halcyon age before online, when friends would jostle for space around a single TV, playing games, eating chips, and talking endless amounts of smack to each other.

On the flipside, we reckon that co-op, being a relatively new feature to gaming, is yet to reach its peak. Games like Resistance 2 and Left 4 Dead are leading the charge, and there's a very good chance that Resident Evil 5 will push this feature to new heights. There'll be plenty of games in the future that you and your brother can enjoy in the near future.



LETTER OF THE MONTH WINS... SFIV!

The letter of the month this issue will receive a copy of *Street Fighter IV* for their troubles – enjoy!



RAY OF LIGHT

I was just reading the last copy of your great mag (I have been a fan for a long time) but I was reading the letter of the week and was rather shocked at the negative feedback towards Sony, with regards to the 'Blu-ray of death'.

I too have been visited by the fateful Blu-ray of death, in fact it was a day after *GTA IV*'s release, I was devastated to say the least, but when I rang Sony and they were nothing but helpful, my PS3 was even two months out of warranty and I still got the service for free. I was truly shocked but grateful to Sony and its ability to extend such great customer service towards me – not only that but the PS3's backup system was truly a saviour. I didn't lose a single saved game and the only inconvenience was that I had to download my bought games again.

Nelson, via email

That's the thing with customer service Nelson, even with bigger corporate entities, half the time it all depends on whether you get the right person, at the right time, in the right mood. Thankfully it seems like all the stars were aligned for you to receive some of the best customer service in Sony history! We're glad, and it's always good to hear the other, better, side of the story.

UPDATE

Hi OPS, I'm a proud PS3 owner and I recently got *Resistance 2* for Christmas. It's great, but I went to go and play it on the weekend, and when I tried to sign in to the PSN a dreaded message came up. A system software update is required. This brings me to the point of my e-mail. Firmware updates. They are the bane of my online-game playing existence. Don't get me wrong, I think it's great that the PS3's software is always getting better, but the fact that the updates are frequent (and large) and require you to download them before you go onto the PSN is a real problem for me. I have about a 2GB download quota. I love the PS3, but the fact that you have to download so much just to play online gets on my nerves.

Daniel McEvoy, via email

We love the PS3 too, but we get stung by system updates too. Check out page 24 for a similar opinion.

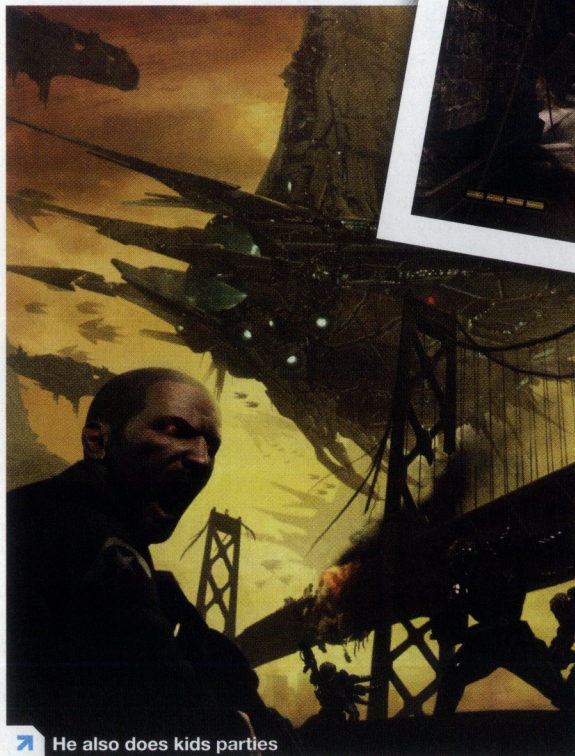
IRRESISTABLE

All right, *Resistance 2*, WTF is up with this game? I have to admit that *R2* is decent, and I love Insomniac. But there is more than one thing that stopped it from reaching true greatness – it does not have the same ground breaking power of *R1*. I mean come on what happened to the health system in *R2*? What was wrong with the health system in *R1*, why was it changed? It made you think, and adapt to different situations.

Another thing that really annoys me is your allies in *R2*. When I heard that your allies in *R2* were going to be vastly improved I was pretty stoked. Ultimately, however, I was disappointed. In *R1* you felt like you were all powerful compared to your allies, but this sense of power gets thrown out the window when the sentinels came to your assistance. This is not just the allies fault it's the enemies too – they just die... easily! Sure, there are some hard to kill bad-arse bosses and leaders but what happened to the hybrids? They provided a real challenge in the original, but have been nerfed in the sequel.

Lachlan, via email

We'll thoroughly agree that the original Resistance was a blast, and we'll also concede that Resistance 2 isn't exactly perfect, but in many ways it's easy to put on the rose-tinted glasses when it comes to games – and remember them as being more fun than they actually were. We reckon Resistance 2 has made some serious strides for the series, especially in terms of scale. It's far from perfect, but we think if you were to go back to the original now, after playing the sequel, you'll see just how far the game has come.



He also does kids parties



SPEAK TO US

Love the mag? Hate the mag? We want your opinions and questions on *OPS*, on games – on *anything* that you feel the need to share with your fellow readers. The best letter of each issue wins the Game of the Month! Write to us on paper or on a computer at:

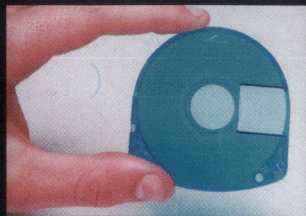
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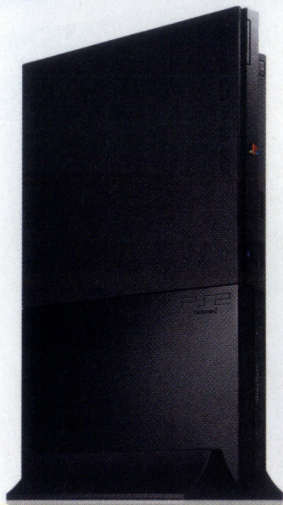
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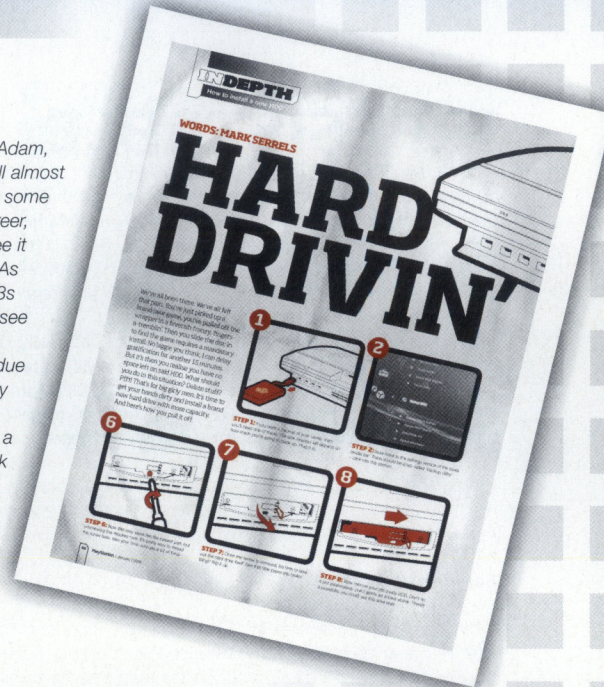
Remember when Sony released the OG PlayStation there was a slim version, then when they had released the PlayStation 2 they also had a cheaper, much more affordable version? Now my question is this – will Sony bring out a slim version of the PlayStation 3? There have been plenty of rumours that the slim version was going to come out sometime in 2008 but nothing came of it, and I'm wondering we'll

perhaps see one in the near future. I also find it unfair that people in America get the 160 GB PlayStation 3! What the hell is up with that?

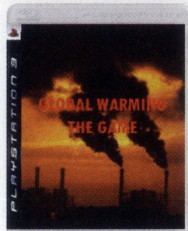
Adam, via email



As for your first question Adam, we'd expect that there will almost certainly be a PS3 slim at some stage in the console's career, but we don't expect to see it until 2010 at the earliest. As for the lack of 160GB PS3s in Australia, we still don't see it as being that much of a disadvantage, especially due to the fact that it's so easy (and totally legal) to put a new HDD in your PS3 for a criminally low price. Check out our guide in issue 26 and give it a go – it's a lot easier than you think.



IT SHOULD BE A GAME!



GLOBAL WARMING THE GAME

By Lachlan McKenna

Play as Carbon Dioxide and destroy all humans! Target key populated areas in order to thicken the atmosphere and heat up the Earth. Swerve to avoid trees and government officials in your bid to kill all humans as fast as possible. Killing a lot of humans at a time may speed up the game but the humans can become aware of your actions and introduce crazy carbon laws in order to stop you gaining control! You may be helped by governments that trade oil or deforestation companies but be prepared for people who want to HELP the only planet they've got and SAVE money on their electricity bill. When will it end? That is the question, and it's up to you to decide.

The legendary feature, 'It Should Be a Game', is back by popular demand! Naturally, since we just brought it back an' all, we haven't received that many entries as of yet. That's where you come in. Send us all your game ideas, funny, serious, insane or otherwise to ops@derwenthoward.com.au. If you happen to have any 'mad Photoshop skillz' then flex those muscles and send us some pics to go with it. It'll make your entry all the more sweet. Get cracking people!

THE PlayStation CROSSWORD!

Official Magazine - Australia

TEST YOUR BRAIN TO WIN A GAME!

How to enter: Use the letters from the coloured squares and re-arrange them to form the name of a videogame character. Send your answers to OPS@derwenthoward.com.au with OPS Crossword as the subject. Entries close March 24.

ACROSS

1. Virtual shepard sim, Herdy ____ (5)
4. Vanelona or Esperito (3)
6. Jak's ottsel (6)
8. Mortal Kombat's coolest kombatant (3,4)
9. Samuel L. Jackson in *San Andreas* (8)
11. The R in *F.E.A.R.* (5)
15. Bruce Willis' Robotron-inspired end-of-the-world blaster (10)
17. Eddy Gordo's martial art of choice (8)
19. *The Getaway*: ____ Monday (5)
22. He's very serious (3)
26. *Syphon Filter* hardcase, Gabe ____ (5)
27. Extreme sport from Acclaim,

Agressive ____ (6)

28. The L in Navy SEALs (4)
29. He struck back in *Crash Bandicoot 2* (6)

DOWN

1. Guilty or Metal (4)
2. GUN's gun-for-hire, ____ White (6)
3. Conquered the Land of the Babes (4,5)
4. Kiwi developers of *Rugby League* (5)
5. GTA's country of origin (8)
7. *Thrasher*: Skate and ____ (7)
10. Looks just like Dante (4)
12. Capcom's wolf (5)
13. The S in NASCAR (5)
14. The first contry visited in the original *Colin McRae Rally* (3,7)
16. Snake or Ocelot (6)
18. AC/DC *Live: Rock Band* track, 'Whole Lotta ____' (5)
20. *True Crime* developer (8)
21. *Dropship: United ____ Force* (5)
23. Banned snuff game (7)
24. *Street Fighter* sumo (1,5)
25. What is the main courtyard in *Home* called? Home ____ (6)



THE OPS QUIZ THING

Our imaginatively titled quiz will sort out the wheat from the chaff. Prove your worth with these brainbusters!

1. NAME THE MAN WHO COMPOSED THE SCORE FOR METAL GEAR SOLID 2, 3 AND 4

- a) John Williams
- b) Harry Gregson-Williams
- c) Kenny Loggins

2. HOW DO YOU KILL CHANCE AT THE END OF SYPHON FILTER 2?

3. WHAT GAME FEATURES JADE, PEYJ AND DOUBLE H?

4. FILL IN THE GAP:

WWE SmackDown! Just Bring It, ____, WWE SmackDown! Here Comes The Pain.

6. WHAT AUSTRALIAN RALLY CHAMPION FEATURED ON THE LOCAL PACKSHOT FOR V-RALLY 3? WHAT MADE IT ODD?

6. WHAT DO THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERS HAVE IN COMMON WITH EACH OTHER?



CUTTINGS

CHAMPION

Tell that Serrels guy he's an utter champion for writing that HDD installation instruction guide.

Chook, via email

We just had a word to Serrels, and told him that he is indeed a 'champion'. He said 'thanks a lot big man'. At least that's what we think he said, as the words were somehow buried deep within an archaic Scottish indecipherable brogue the likes of which neither man nor beast could possibly comprehend.

WORLD TOUR

When do you think we are going to be able to buy the Guitar Hero World Tour instruments seperately? Because I would really like to buy the drumkit.

Christopher, via email

We would say that you'll be able to pick up the drumkit separately at some point - the date we've heard being banded around is March/April. We're guessing it'll largely depend on the tricky economics of supply and demand.

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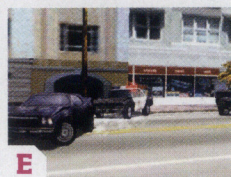
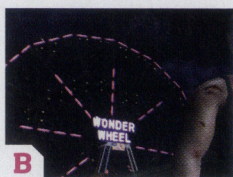
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5. IDENTIFY THE GAMES FROM THE SCREENSHOTS:



Answers: 1. b) Harry Gregson-Williams 2. Knock him into the rear blades of a helicopter 3. Beyond Good & Evil 4. WWE SmackDown! Shut Your Mouth 5. A) Shadow of the Colossus B) The Warriors C) Urban Chaos: Riot Response D) Medal of Honor: Underground E) Driver F) Killzone 2 6. Neal Bates. It was odd because while he and his car were on the box art, neither he nor his car actually appeared in the game. 6. They're all voiced by the same actor, Nolan North

STORMRISE™



Realising that something needed to be done to safeguard the future from mankind's environmental footprint; the world's best scientists were commissioned to come up with a permanent solution.

Taking 22 years to design and produce, the result was a force-field developed to supplement the deteriorating atmosphere, putting an end to global warming once-and-for-all.

The force-field was hailed as a success the world over, but some things were never designed to be controlled. Nature always finds its own path.

Known only as 'The Event', the effects of the subsequent storms were the same everywhere; nothing was spared, buildings, road surfaces and fields were stripped away and entire cities were flattened in mere days.

Realising that there was no escape from this all-consuming monster, creeping out from the equatorial regions, authorities began to build huge underground structures to house cryogenic hibernation chambers, to sleep out the storm. What began as a relatively structured process soon deteriorated into chaos as the populace realised that there wasn't going to

SAI

We, the Sai have suffered in ways that can not be described. We did not hide from the storm; we did not have the option. We adapted ourselves and learnt how to survive and endure on the unforgiving surface. Many perished. Every one of my Sai brethren have earned their place on this planet and this is something no one can take away from us.



Rangers

Frontier scouts & Militia troops best deployed in large numbers



Warriors

Hunters and Protectors, the ferocious strong arm of the Sai



Spectres

The silent knives in the night, Spectres are a true nightmare for Echelon



Scorpions

Off-road vehicles used to patrol the wastelands & to provide light strike power



The Rage

Malevolence incarnate, The Rage exudes power and anger.



Brood Queens

A mutated creation of genetically manipulated crabs infused with Sai energy.



Locusts

Flying units that can wipe-out surprised enemy infantry with their powerful Gatling guns



Rift Worms

Ferocious flying predators that eagerly obliterate all those who oppose them



Sirens

Powerful women who are able to bend the laws of nature with seeming indifference.

**A CHANGE IS
COMING TO RTS ON
CONSOLE IN MARCH 2009**

be enough room to house the remaining survivors. Panic ensued, difficult decisions had to be made, and only a privileged few were assured safety.

The doors to the massive complexes were sealed. Its thousands of occupants forced into a dreamless sleep that would last for centuries. Many of those outside starved, some descended into madness, and others tore each other apart with the rage of desperation and anger.

Only a few surface dwellers endured. Slowly evolving beyond their original design and developing extra sensory abilities. With limited means they attempted to rebuild the world, left battered and bare by the event.

The new race, known as The Sai, had to fend for themselves, using partial remnants of the technology left by their sleeping ancestral cousins. They built their makeshift living quarters over and around the submerged rubbles of cities and only spoke about the 'old' population in whispers around campfires.

But, the cryogenic chambers were only designed to last for a certain length of time, and on one dark morning, they sprang to life and the long-forgotten inhabitants woke to reclaim their planet. The Echelon emerge...



ECHELON

My people we're the fortunate ones. We had the opportunity to sleep out the horrific years that followed the event. The general populace have always appreciated our presence, but there is no doubt that a climate of descent is mounting. These extremist have only their own interests at heart. These radicals need to be dealt with decisively, before they threaten the safety of us all.



Enforcers

Heavily armed frontline troops loyal to the Chancellor.



Sentinels

Determined and vigilant squads charged with defending key strategic points



Infiltrators

The arbiters of justice, Infiltrators seek out the hidden enemies of the Echelon



Prowlers

Highly mobile vehicles that provide security both on the ground and in the air



Arc Hammers

The iron fist of the Echelon, their appearance alone is enough to quell an uprising



Stalkers

Tall, menacing bipedal machines engineered to swiftly destroy the enemy



Seekers

The eyes of the Echelon, tasked with patrolling the frontier & identifying trouble spots



Hunters

Raining spears from the sky, Hunters are the tactical support vehicle of choice



The Eclipse

Built to shield & save mankind from the storm, this is the most powerful vessel ever created

COMPETITIONS

WIN! WIN! WIN!



RIVERS OF BABYLON

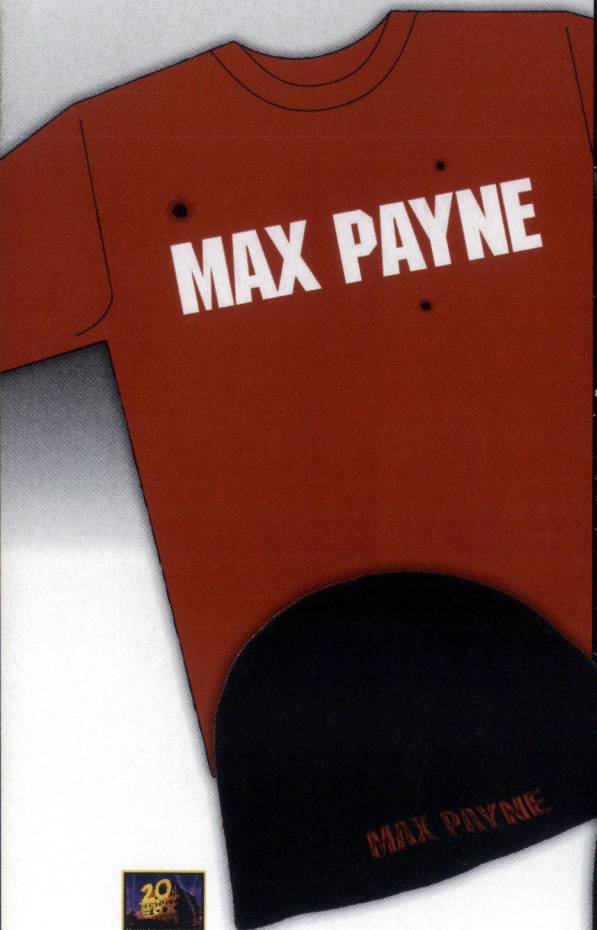
To celebrate the release of *Babylon AD* on DVD this February 20th Century Fox and OPS are giving you the chance to win one of 10 great *Babylon AD* prize packs featuring *Babylon AD* on DVD, and a *Babylon AD* T-shirt and watch. *Babylon AD* is available to rent on DVD February 18.

To enter, head to www.gameplayer.com.au/competitions and tell us, in 25 words or less, what the future will be like.

GAMEPLAYER CODE WORD:
BABYLON



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TO THE MAX

To celebrate the release of *Max Payne* on DVD this February 20th Century Fox and OPS are giving you the chance to win one of 10 great *Max Payne* prize packs featuring *Max Payne* on DVD, and a *Max Payne* wallet, beanie and T-shirt. *Max Payne* is available to rent on DVD February 25.

To enter, head to www.gameplayer.com.au/competitions and tell us, in 25 words or less, a more pun-tacular cop name than 'Max Payne'.

GAMEPLAYER CODE WORD:
PAYNE



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COMPETITIONS

WIN! WIN! WIN!



Tom Clancy's

HAWX



THE AIR UP THERE

To mark the upcoming release of *Tom Clancy's HAWX* Ubisoft and OPS are giving you the chance to win some great prizes. One lucky winner will receive a copy of *Tom Clancy's HAWX* plus a Thrustmaster flight controller, and 14 runners-up will score a copy of the game!

To enter, head to www.gameplayer.com.au/competitions and tell us, in 25 words or less, what your pilot callsign would be and why.

GAMEPLAYER CODE WORD:
TOPGUN

HOW TO ENTER

To enter Official PlayStation competitions log on to www.gameplayer.com.au/competitions or send your entries with the name of the competition CLEARLY marked to OPS competitions PO BOX 1037, Bondi Junction 1355. Please include your name, age and address with your answer on the back of an envelope. Chance plays no part in determining winners. Competitions open 18/02/2009 and close 18/03/2009. Winners will be notified by mail and names displayed at www.gameplayer.com.au

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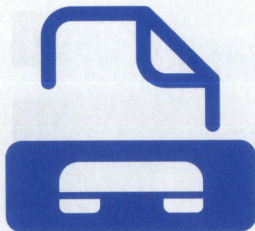
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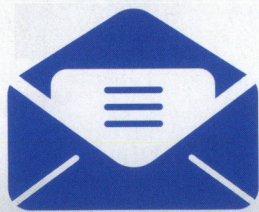


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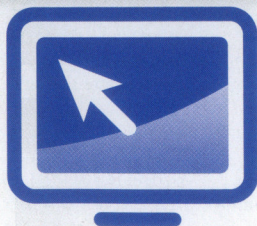
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CAPTAIN PLANET

LittleBigPlanet has revolutionised the way we look at user-created content, with an almost endless stream of new levels available every day. The accessibility of *LittleBigPlanet* means anyone can be a game designer - you just need a little patience and a lot of imagination. OPS spoke to the creator of some of *LittleBigPlanet*'s most popular levels about the custom-content phenomenon.

OPS: Thanks for taking the time to talk to us mate. Could you tell us a bit about yourself, where you're from, hobbies...

OLE-MARIUS: Yeah, sure. My name is Ole-Marius and I'm from Norway. I'm currently studying Motion Graphics, which is just a fancy way of saying animation. I have also studied art, so I try to incorporate that into my levels. When I'm not at school I'm waiting for my PS3 to return from service. Sorry I'm a bit late but I was very busy finishing two new levels this Christmas - Mystery Mine and The Scary Factory Overlooking the Small Village.

OPS: Could you just tell us how you got into making levels for *LBP* - when were you first made aware of *LBP*, and were you interested in making levels from the beginning?

OLE-MARIUS: I learned about *LBP* from GDC and I was captivated right away. Level creation really was the big draw for me. Neatly wrapped in a stylistic platformer. Fresh and funky!

OPS: What do you think about the overwhelmingly positive responses to your levels so far? Have you had any feedback from fans or, possibly, from Media Molecule themselves?

OLE-MARIUS: It's been unbelievable. I never imagined that my levels would get this popular. I even got contacted by MM, which was huge.

OPS: Has anyone got nasty? Or sent you a dodgy message over the PSN?

OLE-MARIUS: No, people are generally really nice. Mostly it's just friend requests. Sadly I can't accept them all.

OPS: Can you take us through your process? How do you get started making a level, how long does it take, what inspires you, etc?

OLE-MARIUS: I start with coming up with a concept. I usually have usually a few concepts baking before I start building anything. I choose the one I like best and just start building the level, one challenge at the time. I never really do any planning, but I might have an idea for what I want at some point later on in the level. Then I just build until the thermometer fills up which usually takes me about a week. After some play testing I publish it.

OPS: Your levels are some of the most popular in *LBP* - how do you go about getting the map out there? Is it just a case of publishing the level and letting nature take its course, or

do you have to find ways to sell or 'market' the level? What is involved in 'pimping' a *LBP* level?

OLE-MARIUS: The only marketing I've done is a forum post, but that didn't get any attention at all, so I guess I was just lucky really. In the beta, especially, what got the most plays was almost completely random. (What gets the most plays seems almost completely random, especially in the beta).

OPS: What would you say makes a good level? Do you have any other favourites from the user-created levels - or maybe even a level made by Media Molecule itself?

OLE-MARIUS: Detail almost always impresses me, unless it's at the expense of good old fun. Since my PS3 is broken I haven't really had the chance to sit down and sift through all the community levels yet so I don't really have any favourites at this point.

OPS: Are you looking to get into game development as a full time career?

OLE-MARIUS: Absolutely, game development has been a dream of mine for a few years now. Hopefully *LBP* will be a way for rookie designers to get noticed.

OPS: About the actual tool set of *LBP* - how do you find the create mode in general? Did it meet your expectations? Do you ever find yourself imagining something that you can't create in *LBP*? Is there anything you'd like to see refined or redesigned?

OLE-MARIUS: I find the create mode to be excellent, the only limiting factor is your own imagination. I'd say that feature wise it is almost complete, but I'll also admit that it isn't bug free. Bolts, switches and speakers, etc. often disappear if you join together two objects using the same material. It's really annoying. I also find that the rewind function is sometimes painfully slow, the only remedy I have found is signing out of PSN, which is not ideal. The Corner Editor tool also needs a slight overhaul since it's highly situational whether it works or not.

OPS: Does it ever bother you when cheap and nasty levels (such as Seven trophies in Seven Seconds, etc.) are





“ My two most popular levels, God of War and World of Colour – were moderated a while ago... I still can't see why World of Colour was moderated, twice. ”

LBP? What are your thoughts on the way Media Molecule and Sony are managing the levels?

OLE-MARIUS: My two most popular levels, God of War and World of Colour – were moderated a while ago, mostly because of the rubbish way moderation was handled earlier on. I still can't see why World of Colour was moderated, twice. Now I don't even have the levels on my moon so I guess they're gone, which is kind of sad considering I spent a lot of time building those levels. Maybe if someone has copied them to their moon they can publish them as locked and copyable and send me a key. It would be great to see them up and running again. Hopefully the moderation has improved now.

ranked higher than levels that creators put a lot of hard work and effort into?

OLE-MARIUS: Yes. This was a problem especially close after release, but I think it's gotten better now. It's always a bummer seeing someone's ten-minute creation getting ten times the amount of plays and hearts as a ten-hour or hundred-hour creation. It's just silly.

OPS: What do you think about the way Sony and Media Molecule let players share levels? The feeling of most players is that the whole thing could have been managed a bit better – do you have any thoughts?

OLE-MARIUS: I think that the sorting system has improved a lot. It's not just displaying the most played levels, but randomises a bit so that up and coming levels also get a chance. But I still think that it to some degree is a question of luck whether your level catches on or not.

OPS: How about moderation? Have you ever fallen prey to the mods on

OPS: What sort of features would you like to see Media Molecule release in the future for LBP? And finally – where do you see LBP heading in the next two to three years?

OLE-MARIUS: I really hope they release a way of changing the lighting (from day to night, etc.) in the middle of a level, or over the course of a level. For example you could start at sunset but as you progress through the levels it keeps getting darker and darker. Or when you exit a cave the light could dramatically change. A way for keeping track of deaths and even teams would be cool. I think we would see a lot of new and interesting maps, with arenas and the like. I think they did a great job with the recent MGS4 pack, the Paintinator really added another feature to the game which I think we'll see a lot of exciting levels based around. I hope that we see a lot more of these packs in the coming months and years. ♪



Build your own adventure



Punks. Shorter these days



Ghosts. They're usually scarier

INCOMING

Exclusive looks at the very best



42 Eat Lead
Finally, a game that takes the piss out of years of convention!

IT'S LIKE...

28 Days Later

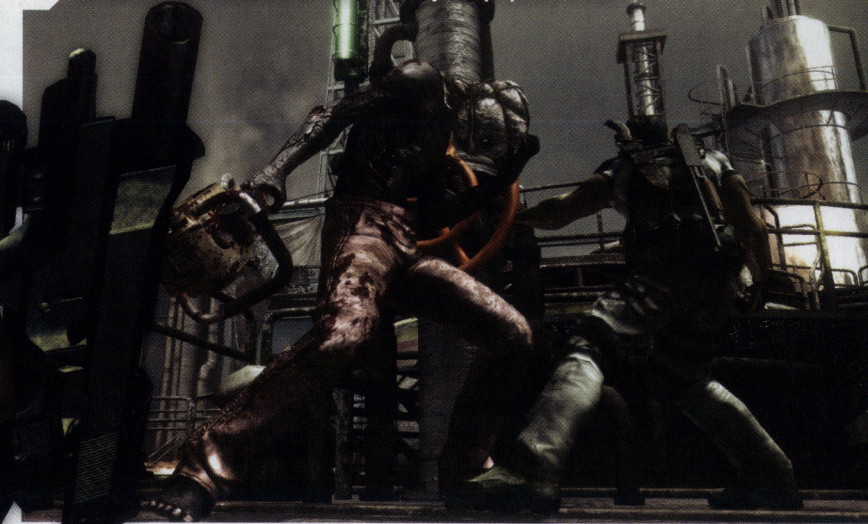


The Thing



"Oh, and Chris? If you keep staring at my crotch I'll shoot you myself"

The chainsaw baddies will still cleave you up quick-smart



PS3 GENRE: HORROR | RELEASE: MARCH 2009 | DISTRIBUTOR: TBC | DEVELOPER: CAPCOM

RESIDENT EVIL 5

Nab some green herb and kill monsters next gen style!



43 SuperCar Challenge

The spiritual sequel to add the best of the rest to the formula!



44 Alpha Protocol

Spy hard with this mix of Bond, Bourne and Bauer!



46 The Chronicles of Riddick: Assault on Dark Athena

Diesel fuel.



48 I Am Alive

The earth-shattering survive 'em up from Ubisoft that's shaking things up.

“I, er, musta loosened it for you, I guess”



THE RETURN OF THE CHAINSAW MAN, SORTA

It looks like bag head, the chainsaw chappie from *RE4*, has an African relative. Actually, several – as multiple skinny, bag-wearing, chainsaw wielding infected locals pop up and are pretty damn hard to finish off. No stills, but he gets a cameo in this trailer: <http://www.ps3fanboy.com/2008/05/31/chainsaws-and-plagas-resident-evil-5-trailer/>. The bad news is, it seems you can't pick up the chainsaw which is just... lame.

Again, early days – but how awesome would a chainsaw duel be?

It's beautiful watching a series come of age, like a baby growing into a larger, but not morbidly obese, child. You see some improvements and some missteps – but the point is, you're watching it grow.

To be honest, we began to wonder if *Resident Evil* had a learning disability. It's obsessive reliance on D-pad controls. Little things like when you get to a ladder and try to climb it and the game asks, "Would you like to climb the ladder? Yes/No".

No, stupid game, we want to put on a little Joe Cocker, open a fine bottle of red and make sweet, sweet love to the ladder.

Of course we want to bloody climb it! It's a ladder. Ain't much else you can do with it unless you make it horizontal and go

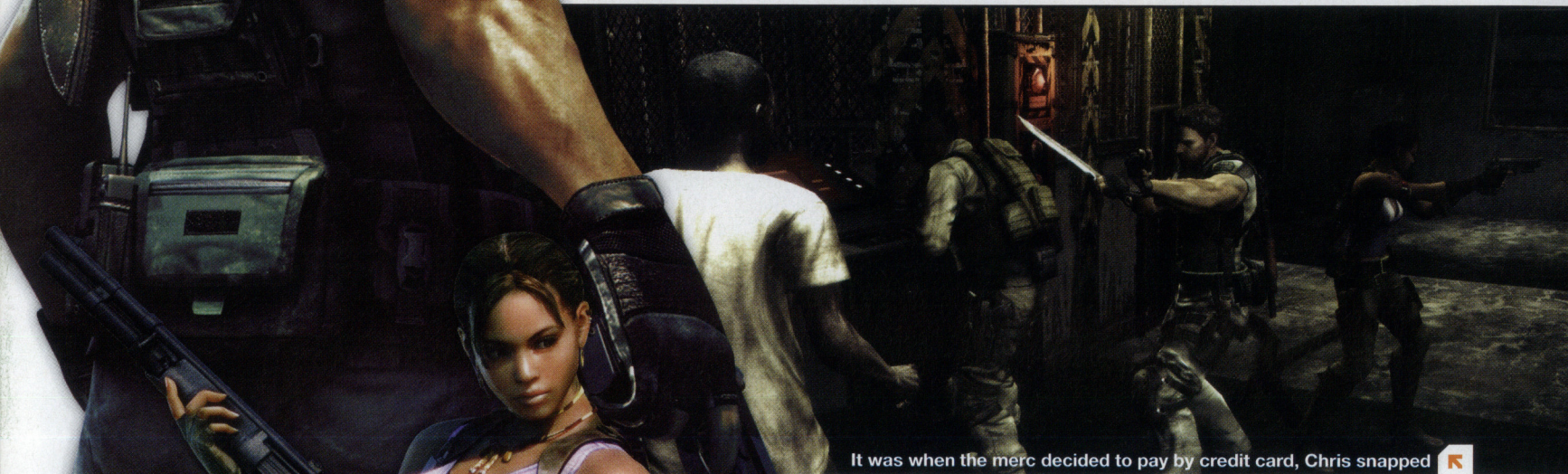
nuts on some home made monkey bars.

Then *Resident Evil 4* came – and it was one big growth spurt.

Eschewing the slow moving – or 'Romero Zombie' (based on *Night of the Living Dead*, *Dawn of the Dead*, *Day of the Dead*, *Land of the Dead* and, er... *Diary of the Dead* director George Romero) for infected Eastern European villagers, one of whom had a bag over his head and a chainsaw. The game felt very familiar but everything had been improved. Yes, there was the odd, "Would you like to use the key?" moment,

but the tweaked combat and camera combined with genuinely heart-pounding scenes featuring fast moving locals had fans declaring the game the best of the series since, say, *RE2*. It was much more open, the gameplay less sluggish and, of course, there were monsters aplenty.

Helmet safety. Not exactly a priority when you're already dead



It was when the merc decided to pay by credit card, Chris snapped

SO WHAT BLOOD-DRIPPIN' TREATS DOES RE5 BRING TO THE TABLE?

To be honest, it plays very similarly to *RE4*. That's not a bad thing, but don't expect the revelation that *RE4* was compared to earlier *Resident Evil* games. From a pure gameplay perspective it's extremely similar, with some exceptions. First up, the location: Africa, the wild continent. And in Africa a virus seems to be spreading amongst the population.

OKAY, JUST LET'S HAVE US A LITTLE TIME OUT

Now if you're one of those ladies or gents who thinks merely mentioning the name of a continent (Africa) and the people of that continent (Africans) and setting a fictional story – read that part again, fictional story – is somehow even close to something resembling racist – this next message is for you, and you alone:

There are unjust wars, famine and disease going on in the real world right now. In fact there's a lot of really awful stuff going on. The setting of a videogame is waaaay down the list. If you really want to help the world volunteer at a soup kitchen, work with the elderly and dying, or go to a burns ward.

See how important the setting of a video game is to them. Either that or shut your collective, ignorant noise holes. Okay, we just had to get that out.

Moving on...

THE WILD CONTINENT JUST GOT WILDER

So it's roughly 10 years since the first *Resident Evil* and you play Chris Redfield – who obviously has something on his mind. We're not going to tell you yet – it's a surprise – but the game itself moves at a pace unseen in previous *Resident Evil* entries. It's as if Capcom realised it's going to be bloody hard to scare the fans and newbies who have at the very least seen some of the other games.

Within 10 minutes of the game you're in a situation very much like the first village in *RE4*. You have to block doors with shelves and the like, and then you and your partner try to kill as many infected/zombie/baddies before the shack is literally ripped open by a massive man/mutant with an axe.

UM, YOUR PARTNER?

Oh, yeah, in the levels we saw Chris is coupled with Sheva Alomar. Oi, cease your moaning, you puppy-friskers! We weren't big fans of the useless partner in *RE4* either.

TRIANGLE OF JOY

Resident Evil games have the dubious distinction of having one of the most fiddly inventory systems ever. Now you just press **A** and you can fiddle with you and Sheva's swag. A more in depth inventory exists but it's nice to see an attempt at least at streamlining the game.

Chris's suspicions he left the gas on weren't exactly off the money **K**

THE KING OF THE DEAD

Aforementioned director George Romero (he might have been going by George A. Romero at the time) actually shot an advertisement for *Resident Evil 2* (or *Biohazard* as it's known in Japan) way back in 1998. This was perfect because *RE2* is possibly the closest to the man's films.

Dogs. They travel in packs. Like cigarettes **K**

The chopper. They got to it

Her only saving grace was that when she climbed a ladder you could see her undies.

Sheva is an entirely different kettle of cats. Really.

See, our Chris is a member of B.S.A.A. (Bioterrorism Security Assessment Alliance) and Sheva's something of a rising star in the West African branch of the same.

Her inclusion has had some very positive effects. For a start, if you give her a gun and some ammo, chances are she's going to take out a healthy number of beasties. She's also programmed to do startling melee attacks when you press circle – she'll snap-kick the slaving creature's head clean off. Of course this goes both ways, you have to save her – but Chris is the melee man! There's a great little conceit where if you shoot an infected close range he or she will fall back, leaving you open to press **Ⓢ** and melee attack – this is contextual, depending on where you shot said foe. You have a devastating uppercut and ammo is really scarce so we recommend getting good at this.

Also check your exits, shoot explosive barrels and don't be afraid to run somewhere else. Believe it or not there are parts – two that we saw – where the game almost becomes sandboxy.

You have an entire village. Do you run,

shoot a few and run again? Do you get on top of a building, kick the ladders down and shoot anyone who tries to climb up or do you take the bastards head on? Imagine the village scene from *RE4* with a massive map and harder foes.

YOU SAID TWO SANDBOXES!

Ahhh, yes. That's the other thing, sometimes you'll be asked to man jeeps, mounted guns and, in this case, a boat. You'll find a *Cannibal Holocaust*-like tribe who worship a massive alligator, as you see when they sacrifice a screaming bloke to the toothy maw of the beast. Actually, when you're fighting these guys there are so many nice touches. If you blast a dude into the water there's a brief underwater struggle and the water turns red. Yes, it's just a little thing but *RE5* has a lot of 'little things'. Said accumulation of such things makes the game exponentially better.

Sometimes you shoot an enemy in the head and a mutant flying thing shoots out of his neck hole. Other times slimy, vaguely phallic, tentacles try to grab you – like a morning horn turned evil – and sometimes their head just blows up.

The dogs have been given a revamp and look amazing. Just like the one

from John Carpenter's *The Thing*. The environments are nowhere near as limited as the trailers have suggested and if you like to shoot big monsters well, you are so very much in the right place.

ANYTHING NEGATIVE?

Sometimes, what with the number of infected villagers trying to chop you up, things get a bit crowded – but you can usually break out of that with a melee attack. Other than that you've got great graphics, amazing bosses – and lots of them. Like seriously, it's a boss-o-rama here.

The partner thing works well for the most part. You can give her a handgun and she'll cover you while you snipe like a madman, she'll hold spotlights in a cave, she'll go around and unlock the door from the other side and she'll heal you if you ask.

Not wanting to give things away but she can also do stuff like get her to pull a lever on command. After luring a beastie into an industrial furnace we slid out just as we gave the command to fire it up.

Nice. Very nice.

WRAP IT UP, GORE-HOUND

What more can we say? It's next-gen *Resident Evil*. And though it's more action

horror than scary or weird horror it will get your adrenalin going. Apparently you can do some online stuff, including going through the game co-op, one of you as Chris, one as Sheva and that sounds awesome. They also mentioned you could do it offline, split screen but the code we played didn't have that. Let's hope it's in the final version.

Resident Evil 5 is looking mighty fine – even the handful of levels we played. The pacing is brisk, the voice acting is actually decent (although Sheva does sound like a Bogan Aussie every now and then, not sure why) and the between scenes info about how Umbrella was born is leading to... something.

But both you and we are going to have to wait to find out. Expect a review next month. **➔ Anthony O'Connor**

WE SAY

- ➔ Great sense of location
- ➔ More freedom
- ➔ It's next gen *Res!*

OPS IS...
Waiting patiently

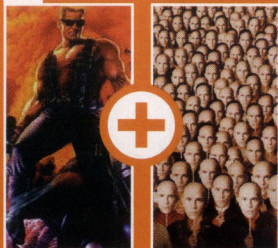


INCOMING

Eat Lead: The Return of Matt Hazard

IT'S LIKE...

Duke Nukem



Being John Malkovich



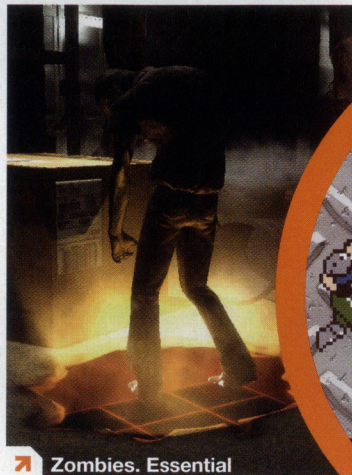
"Whoa, take'er easy there pilgrim," said the John Wayne impersonator

INSIDIOUS INTERNETS

Vicious Cycle has actually gone to some trouble with Matt Hazard's back-story, even to the point of creating fake internet sites that detail his full back catalogue. Head on over to <http://www.doyouremembermatt Hazard.com/> to check out such gaming classics as *A Fistfull of Hazard*, *Matt Hazard 3D*, *You Only Live 1,317 Times*, and *Matt and Dexter*.

If that floats your boat, type <http://therealmatt Hazard.wordpress.com/> into your browser to be taken to the blog of fictional PR wig Ralph Tokey, which is full of his ruminations regarding Matt's influence on US presidential elections, his various in-game adversaries, and the general awesomeness of Neil Patrick Harris.

Breakfast buffet, all you can eat (so long as it's lead)



Zombies. Essential



PS3 GENRE: ACTION | RELEASE: TBA 2009 | DISTRIBUTOR: AFA | DEVELOPER: VICIOUS CYCLE SOFTWARE

EAT LEAD: THE RETURN OF MATT HAZARD

More jokes than you can poke a rubber stick at

Did you see what they did there? Matt Hazard is a fictitious video game character who has ostensibly 'returned' to the spotlight in his latest fourth-wall-breaking adventure. The imaginary back-story sees the eponymous hero make a comeback after a six-year hiatus from the industry.

It all gets a bit complicated after that. You see, Matt Hazard (voiced by Will Arnett) knows he's a video game character, and the entirety of *Eat Lead* is made with this knowledge in mind. The 'game' is presented as a creation of Hazard's evil nemesis Wallace 'Wally' Wellesley (voiced by Neil Patrick Harris), who buys out the game's developer and devises devious ways in which to kill the intrepid hero.

Hazard, armed with 25 years of game-making experience and a helpful PR companion, must do his best to avoid all of Wally's traps, such as ambush spawn points, a cavalcade of various enemy types (zombies, cowboys, gangsters and... butchers), and every main boss that Matt Hazard has fought in his illustrious career.

Hazard will eventually have access to a whole range of genre-specific weapons from his past adventures, so expect to enjoy the incongruity of using a western style six-shooter one moment and then a futuristic laser-rifle the next. He's going to need everything he can get his hands on, too, as Wally will literally change the game on you without warning, such as morphing enemy types or the level theme in real-

time. These changes are accompanied by on-screen pixellation effects to reflect the game's tenuous verisimilitude.

One interesting aspect is that when enemies die they 'de-rez'. They break into their constituent virtual parts and Hazard can use their code to upgrade his own abilities, such as dual-wielding.

Looking at the game from a critical point of view, the third-person shooting doesn't really look like it will offer anything new to the genre. There is an interesting cover system (you point at an area and press a button and Hazard will move there) and Vicious Cycle is pushing its realistic physics system, but in the end this game will live or die on its humour.

Some of the puns so far seem a bit

childish (such as a trailer where Hazard claims to have 'nailed' Lara Croft), but with so many clichéd gaming references packed into one game, some are sure to hit the mark and elicit a good chuckle. Here's hoping. **Dylan Burns**

WE SAY

- ↑ Humorous approach
- ↑ original premise
- ↓ Jokes could fall flat

OPS IS...
A Hazard-free zone



PS3 GENRE: RACING | RELEASE: MID 2009 | DISTRIBUTOR: TBC | DEVELOPER: SYSTEM 3

SUPERCAR CHALLENGE

The game to make you feel like Jeremy Clarkson

IT'S LIKE...

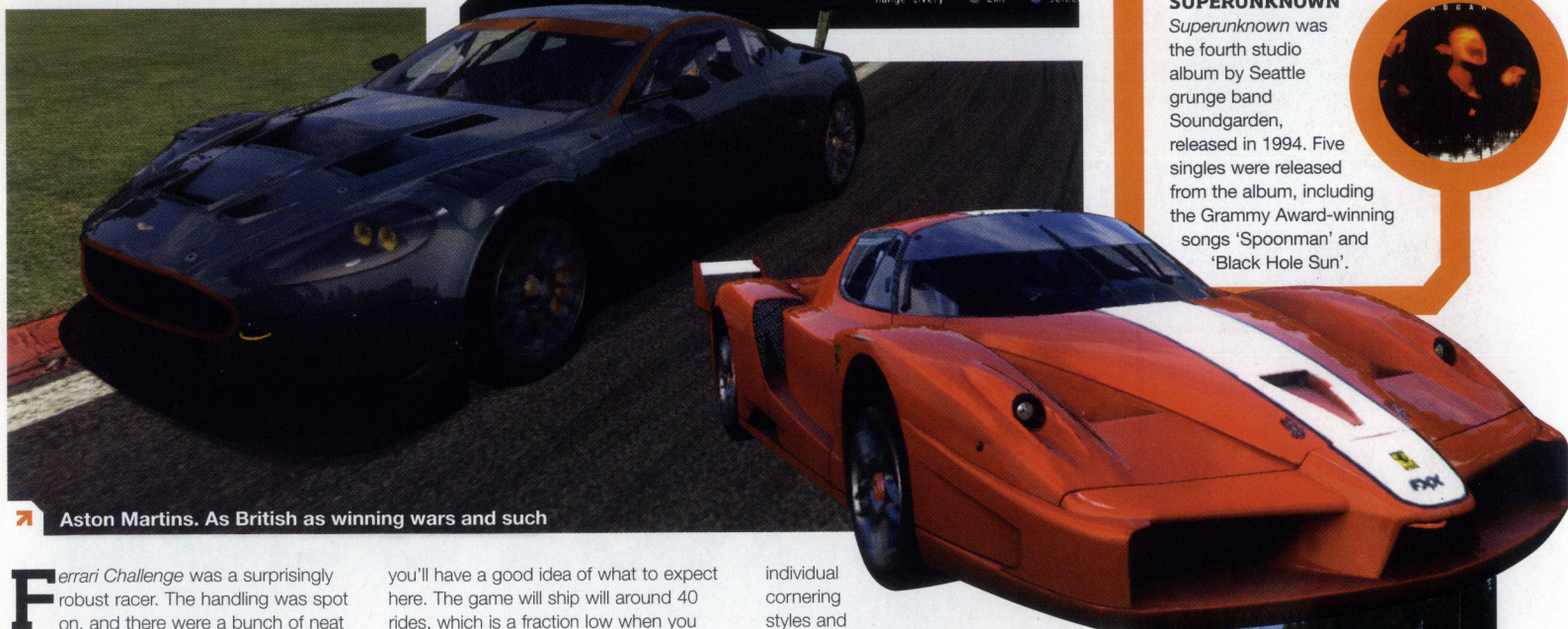
Ferrari Challenge



Not just Ferraris



It's got nine more radiators than your car. Seriously



Aston Martins. As British as winning wars and such

Ferrari Challenge was a surprisingly robust racer. The handling was spot on, and there were a bunch of neat visual effects we really liked. The rain, for instance, was brilliant. It never rains in *Race Driver: GRID*. The main problem with it was that it only featured Ferraris. Ferraris are nice and all, but so are Aston Martins. And Lamborghinis. *SuperCar Challenge*, fortunately, features a whole range of the world's greatest supercars, and, as a result, is a far more appetising prospect than its spiritual prequel.

Of course, there'll be a selection of Fezzas making the cut from 2008's *Ferrari Challenge*, like the FXX – but this time they'll be joined by the likes of the Aston Martin DB9, the Lamborghini Murcielago RGT, the McLaren F1 and many, many more. Think off all the ludicrously expensive metal you see hurtling across Europe on *Top Gear* or on posters in kids rooms and

you'll have a good idea of what to expect here. The game will ship with around 40 rides, which is a fraction low when you compare it to other racers of its ilk, but should suffice.

Equally important as the cars are the tracks, and *SuperCar Challenge* will feature more than 20 tracks, including Silverstone, Spa, Nurburgring and Mugello. More will be revealed over the coming months. As for local tracks, we wouldn't hold our breath. We asked System 3 boss, Mark Cale, when he was in Australia last year plugging *Ferrari Challenge* if he'd heard of Mount Panorama. He hadn't.

Ferrari Challenge's livery creation tool is said to have been improved considerably, so if you want to sully these mechanical masterpieces with stickers and stuff the option is yours. The AI has received an overhaul too. The AI in *Ferrari Challenge* was actually quite impressive; drivers had

individual cornering styles and the differences in 'skill' across the field of competitors seemed more authentic. *SuperCar Challenge* incorporates a new Dynamic AI setting allowing the game to change the challenge you receive based on how well or badly your career is going. *SuperCar Challenge* will also feature a range of assists and an Arcade Mode for beginners, as well as a hardcore full-simulation setting.

Thoughts? We're looking forward to it. A hard-nosed exotic racer will be the perfect thing to whet our appetites for *Gran Turismo 5*. It'll probably be a little Euro-centric – so it'd be perfect if System 3 saw fit to throw in a HSV W427 (the fastest Aussie built street-legal supercar ever produced) – but we'll see what happens.

— Luke Reilly

THAT'S SUPER!

SUPERMAN

Superman is an over achieving superhero also known as The Man of Steel, The Man of Tomorrow, The Last Son of Krypton, or The Big Blue Boy Scout. He isn't as cool as Batman, and never will be.



SUPERANNUATION

Superannuation is a retirement scheme where employers are required by law to pay a proportion of an employee's salaries and wages into a superannuation fund, which can be accessed when an employee retires.



SUPERUNKNOWN

Superunknown was the fourth studio album by Seattle grunge band Soundgarden, released in 1994. Five singles were released from the album, including the Grammy Award-winning songs 'Spoonman' and 'Black Hole Sun'.



WE SAY

- Great handling
- Nice vehicle range
- Gran Turismo 5?

OPS IS...
The Stig



INCOMING

Alpha Protocol

IT'S LIKE...

Bourne



Deus Ex



7 The punch to the balls. That'd be from the 'Jack Bauer' school of diplomacy then

THE THREE JBS...



JACK BAUER

He's a live firecracker willing to do what it takes to get the informant to squeal. This guy eats crushed glass sandwiches for lunch and wears wooden pegs on his nipples – just because he can.



JASON BOURNE

Pretty good at the ol' CQC, Bourne's only flaw is that he can be confused by shouting, "Don't you remember me?" While he's standing there in an amnesiac trance, you can probably steal his wallet.



JAMES BOND

A bit of a pansy by recent gung-ho spy standards, but Bond wins hands down in the bedroom department. The only other guy who's seen as much sheets time is Hugh Hefner.

PS3 GENRE: ACTION RPG | RELEASE: TBA 2009 | DISTRIBUTOR: SEGA | DEVELOPER: OBSIDIAN ENTERTAINMENT

ALPHA PROTOCOL

The game with the golden fun

This is probably the closest that you're going to get to being a black-ops, superspy, special killer dude (apologies to all who fit that description). In *Alpha Protocol* you'll play as Michael Thorton, a guy who knows how to slip between the cracks of government deniability and take out targets with minimal splash damage.

The story is as clichéd as they come: Michael becomes involved in a mission that doesn't go so well and thus turns rogue in a bid to uncover the conspiracy (definitely), save the girl (maybe) and shoot a few goons in the kneecaps (probably).

You read that right; Obsidian's dialogue system offers you several options when waxing lyrical with the scum of the earth, and not all of them are pretty. There are

three main approaches: suave, aggressive or professional. Those opting to woo the ladies should be able to do so, but if you're more Jack Bauer than James Bond you'll also be able to short-cut conversations by performing various aggressive actions, such as shooting people or smashing bottles across their heads. To force your hand during these moments, whenever you initiate a conversation a short timer ticks down and you must choose your approach quickly.

The game's perspective takes the form of a third-person action title, with plenty of gunplay. But just as *Deus Ex* allowed for multiple approaches to mission objectives, so too will *Alpha Protocol* straddle the divide between action and RPG, with your character earning skill points that can be

spent on upgrading various abilities.

The coolest of these has to be Bullet Storm. Using dual-wielded Uzis, you'll enter a temporary state of unlimited bullets. Shot damage and muzzle flash effects are also increased and Michael will go berserk, laughing maniacally the whole time.

If you're not such a gun crazy loose cannon, there will be the option to upgrade your tech abilities, which will allow you to hack into electronic systems. With gadgets such as EMP mines and electronic trip wires thrown into the mix, the silent but deadly option is looking mighty inviting.

If *Alpha Protocol* wasn't on your games radar before, it definitely should be now. The only problem we can see is that it may feel a little too generic – the spy thing has been done to death in cinema and games

of late, with the latest interactive iterations of both James Bond and Jason Bourne still sitting in many gamers' consoles. Still, shooting people in the kneecaps, that's a game selling mechanic right there. **Dylan Burns**

WE SAY

↑ Forced dialogue

↑ Bullet storm

↓ Spies are old hat

OPS IS...
Shaken, not stirred



PS3 GENRE: FLIGHT | RELEASE: TBC 2009 | DISTRIBUTOR: TBC | DEVELOPER: IC COMPANY

IL-2 STURMOVIK: BIRDS OF PREY

Bally tenpenny ones dropping in the custard!

IL-2 *Sturmovik: Birds of Prey* will be the first console version of the much-lauded PC World War II flight sim series. Cue concern. A lot of gamers will claim PC flight sims, the real hard-nosed ones, are usually reserved for blokes with thick glasses, or those who aren't permitted to live near primary schools. They're uncompromising, and can only be tamed by the most dedicated of beardies. Console flight sims, on the other hand, are generally arcade jobbies – fun but shallow. You can almost smell the inside of the old *Afterburner* capsule when you play them (which was a combination of Doritos and arse sweat as far as we recall).

Luckily, this is looking to fill a hole and be a little of both.

Birds of Prey then, first and foremost, is a flight simulator – but the game will feature variable difficulty settings that'll offer controls ranging from arcade accessibility to hardcore realism.

It's a seriously good-looking game, to be honest. The aircraft themselves are meticulously modelled with anal attention to detail, and they display real-time damage to boot. A nasty scrap can and will leave you with chewed-up control surfaces and holes in your wings and fuselage, and on higher difficulty levels severe damage will affect your plane's airworthiness and handling characteristics. Better still, however, are the environments themselves. We had to admire the detail from a few thousand feet, but the sweeping landscapes that stretch out below loosened our loins.

Birds of Prey was actually announced mid last year, but it was only recently we caught a glimpse of it in action. It's here in the magazine because it looks cool. Simple. In-game clips of massive dogfights featuring up to 100 planes (each with its own AI) spiralling through a sky criss-crossed with vapour trails and

twisting wreckage tumbling to the deck trailing oily black smoke left us somewhat slack-jawed.

Interestingly, there won't be any kind of central hero throughout the game. You'll be flying for a number of different Allied nations anyway (although you can fly as the German Luftwaffe in multiplayer) so it wouldn't make sense. Rather, there will be a roster of characters – none of whom are immune from buying the farm. If someone is killed, they're gone. Like the original *Rainbow Six*, or *Hidden & Dangerous* – neither of which are flight games (they're just the first ones we thought of).

It's very likely the game fans of flight wanted *Blazing Angels* to be, so grab your egg-and-fours and let's get the bacon delivered.

Assuming anyone is even sure what that means. Because we're not.

✶ **Luke Reilly**

IT'S LIKE...

✶ Battle of Britain



✶ Blazing Angels

✶ Hit the silk, or buy the farm



"What ho chaps," exclaimed the charming British stereotype

SOFT LANDING

On March 25, 1944, RAF Sgt Nicholas Alkemade jumped from the blazing tail of an RAF Lancaster that had been critically hit after a raid on Berlin. He landed in a fir forest and was taken prisoner. The twist? He did it without a parachute. When the captain ordered the crew to bail out a fire in the fuselage made it impossible for Alkemade to reach his parachute, but he chose to jump from 5,500 metres rather than burn to death. Falling at nearly 200km/h the thick forest of interlaced branches and 18 inches of snow broke his fall, and he survived with a few burns and strains.

WE SAY

- ↑ Grittier than *Blazing Angels*
- ↑ Surprisingly sexy
- ↓ Unsurprisingly niche

OPS IS...
Ready for takeoff



PS3 GENRE: SHOOTER | RELEASE: TBC 2009 | DISTRIBUTOR: ATARI | DEVELOPER: STARBREEZE STUDIOS

THE CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK: THE ASSAULT ON DARK ATHENA

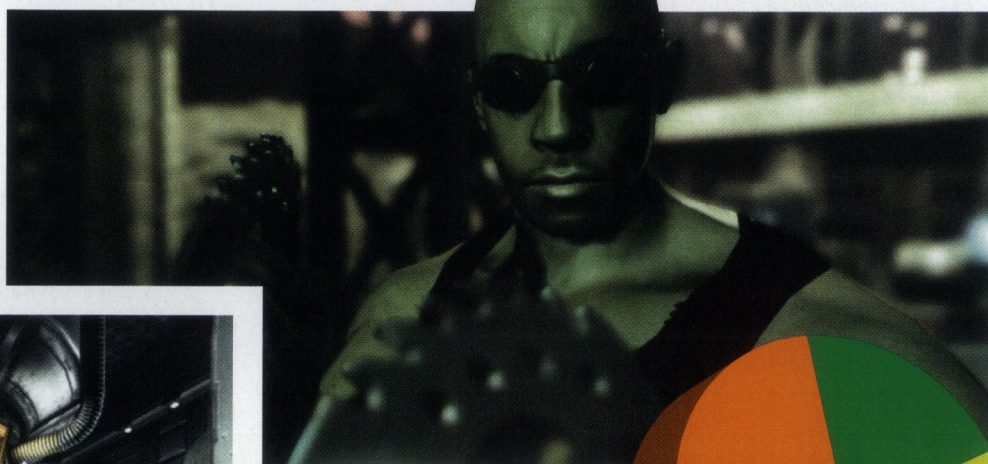
Sam ain't got nothing on this guy

IT'S LIKE...

The Darkness



Splinter Cell



Some of you may remember a little Xbox game called *The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape from Butcher Bay*. While it had its particular vagaries, such as moving to the third-person whenever the main character interacts with objects and a confusing (some would say immersive) first-person fighting system, it still managed to be a fantastic and engaging game.

When word first filtered down that Starbreeze Studios (known most recently for *The Darkness*) was remaking *Butcher Bay*, this time with better graphics and AI,

we welcomed the idea. But then all went quiet for a while and we started to wonder what was going on.

Although things looked a bit shaky last year (the game was dropped by Activision Blizzard and then picked up by Atari) *Assault on Dark Athena* has emerged from the gauntlet of publisher apathy and now looks set to be one of the most impressive game remakes ever (even if that is a very short list).

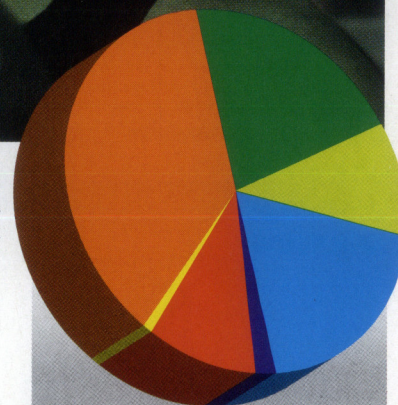
Not only will the original game, complete with a new (as yet undisclosed) multiplayer

mode, be present, but added to the mix will be a continuation of the adventure that sees Riddick escape to a pirate ship named Dark Athena, replete with nefarious goings on within its dark bowels.

The focus will once again be on a hybrid of stealth and action, with Riddick's enhanced eyesight allowing the player to stalk victims from the shadows and take them down silently. Combine this with a tight script, including the voice work of Vin Diesel and sci-fi veteran Lance Henriksen, and your time aboard the Dark Athena should be something of a cinematic tour de force.

Of course, games have evolved since 2004, so Starbreeze has redesigned several aspects of the original game so as to make the old feel new again. A new radial weapon selection system allows you to manage both ranged and melee weapon options easily, and Riddick can now peek around corners – giving you expanded stalking options should you opt for stealth.

If you're thinking this is just a rehash of an old game, you couldn't be more wrong. Atari has mentioned that the Dark Athena storyline will take around eleven hours – that's a full blown game right there! Yep, colour us excited for this one. If Starbreeze can maintain the mature tone, tight script and original blend of action and stealth, this could well be one of the must have titles of 2009. **Dylan Burns**



RIDDICK'S PERSONALITY PIE CHART

- 20% Gravely voice
- 10% Non-emotive facial expressions
- 20% Creepy eyes
- 2% Likes cupcakes
- 10% Enjoys breaking necks
- 1% Patience with fools
- 37% Awesome

WE SAY

- ↑ Vin Diesel
- ↑ Meaty expansion
- ↓ Limited audience?

OPS IS...
Getting eye implants



IT'S LIKE...

Valkyria Chronicles



Comedy



Select character who will change seats? The action flies thick and fast!

"So then we... wait, what are you pointing at?"



DLC, DOOD!

There'll be a ton of downloadable characters on the PSN, including a few faces from Nippon Ichi's other strategy games like Overlord Zetta from *Makai Kingdom* and the dastardly Gig from *Soul Nomad & The World Eaters*.

PS3 GENRE: RPG | RELEASE: TBC 2009 | DISTRIBUTOR: UBISOFT | DEVELOPER: NIPPON ICHI

DISGAEA 3: ABSENCE OF JUSTICE

Looking good, dood

An unlikely success story, 2003's original *Disgaea: Hour Of Darkness* garnered such a cult following that plucky demon-boy Laharl's often hilarious SRPG quest to become the undisputed Overlord of Netherworld was recently re-released via the PSP as *Disgaea: Afternoon Of Darkness*. Its subsequent sequel *Disgaea 2: Cursed Memories* was just as much ridiculous fun with even more on its plate, and now developer Nippon Ichi is bringing the third instalment to the hungry next-gen masses via the PS3 – a first for the company, and great news for tactical role-playing fans. Let's face it, Sony's big bad black machine hasn't exactly been swamped by the genre. Aside from the incredible and criminally underrated *Valkyria Chronicles* (shame on you, Aussie gamers), there's naught in the way of turn-based excellence to be found. That's all set

to change when *Disgaea 3: Absence Of Justice* lands with a comical 'thump' – but only if you dig your retro.

The first thing that struck us is that it doesn't look like Nippon Ichi has bothered to update the previously gorgeous 2D sprites for the new hi-def world they now find themselves in. Things look, er, pretty average on our nice new tellies and there aren't really as many animations as there should be to fully bring this lot of colourful malcontents to life. But if you just come expecting graphical splendour you'd be missing most of the fun. The turn-based charm and seething complexity the series built its fanbase on are intact, with a particularly cool new addition we saw being the 'Magichange' system. Remember how you'd really want to recruit and train up monsters for your party but they were never really as useful as the regular human classes? Well, now

they are – in a big way. Now you can pair up a monster with a human and execute a Magichange mid-battle, with the monster effectively turning into a super-weapon for your character to wield with devastating impunity. Just try turning your new Prinny-gun on those advancing zombies.

Disgaea's always been up for a quirky, hilarious and thoroughly enjoyable storyline, and this one's no exception. Plot-wise, there's no sign of Laharl, Etna, Adell or Rozalin (although there will undoubtedly be some fanservice), with budding young Evil Academy student Mao taking centrestage and pink-haired delinquent best mate/chief rival Raspberyl standing in his way as he attempts to become a 'hero' and wrest the throne from his dad, the Overlord. Why? Because dad mushed his console and games. As good a reason as any. **Toby McCasker**



WE SAY

- ↑ Quirky, cool, and hilarious
- ↑ Great new additions
- ↓ Looks too old

OPS IS... Full of doods



CLOSER TO HOME

Think Australia doesn't get many earthquakes? You're wrong. They happen all the time but are usually too minor to be detected. So far in 2009 we've already had three, and in 2008 there were at least 32. Check out www.seis.com.au/EQ/Earthquakes.html for more info.

7 "ARRGGH, the building, it's coming down! I'll... I'll... cover myself with my hands..."

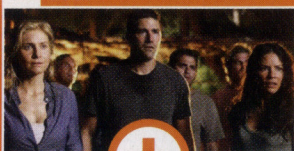
PS3 GENRE: ACTION | RELEASE: TBA 2009 | DISTRIBUTOR: UBISOFT | DEVELOPER: DARKWORKS

I AM ALIVE

But potentially not for long

IT'S LIKE...

Lost



7 Fallout 3

You have to give points to Ubisoft. It could just sit back and be fed grapes from fit ghetto booty thanks to the success of its Tom Clancy and *Prince of Persia* franchises, but instead it's keen to risk face for a brazen project like *I Am Alive*.

While unique, the premise of the game is simple. You find yourself behind the legs of 27-year-old junior executive Adam Collins on his way to work when he's suddenly the jam in a 10.3 magnitude earthquake sandwich. Trapped under the rubble that was Chicago's CBD, there's no light or means of communication with the outside world and Adam has to spend three days wriggling his way to the top of the rubble. When he emerges the city is in the same state as a lorry driver's pants after a sweet corn and mayonnaise tuna pie. There are huge Hollywood cracks in the Earth, skyscrapers have been razed, and every noble tenet of society has faded away. It's 9/11 times 10.

Sound like a setup and a half? Sure does. We've experienced almost every genre trying to crack its way into the videogame medium but for some odd reason games have never seen a pure disaster outing like this. The obvious issue is how will *I Am Alive* bloody well play if there are no bosomy blue-skinned aliens to garrotte, no vehicles to hijack, or criminal ladders to climb?

Differently. While *I Am Alive* uses an open-world level design there's only one major aim of the game – to keep Adam alive. In a post-earthquake city this isn't elementary. The popstar vocalists of 'We Are the World' got it wrong. People are bad, inherently selfish scumbags when it comes to sharing limited resources.

That's particularly true of some of the looting, no-good scumbags trying to survive with you. Gangs will try to mug you for a few droplets of water and to survive you'll have to either avoid, bargain, intimidate, or take these fools head on.

Darkworks is proud of what they're set to achieve with the AI, particularly when it comes to being able to think outside the box. Rather than having an 'intimidate' button, you can use any firearms you find – be they loaded or empty – to boss others around. Likewise negotiation asks you to use your normal powers of reason. Why fight a mob of brain busters who'll eat you up like a white-collar piece of bacon when you can negotiate to give them some water and avoid conflict altogether. In other words ask, "What would Jesus do?" when you're in the game and you'll have a pretty good path to success.

Fortunately, not everyone is a confrontational leech. As Adam you'll meet up with other sane folk like Riley, a 29-year-old bleeding-heart doctor, Peter, a fireman intent on creating a refugee camp for survivors, and the unfortunately named Virgil who's an ex-soldier. Apart from surviving, many of your quests will revolve around gathering resources for



Oops

WORLD'S BIGGEST EARTHQUAKES

A 10.3 magnitude earthquake is huge! To put things into perspective, here's the rundown of some of the largest earthquakes to recently hit.

12 MAY 2008

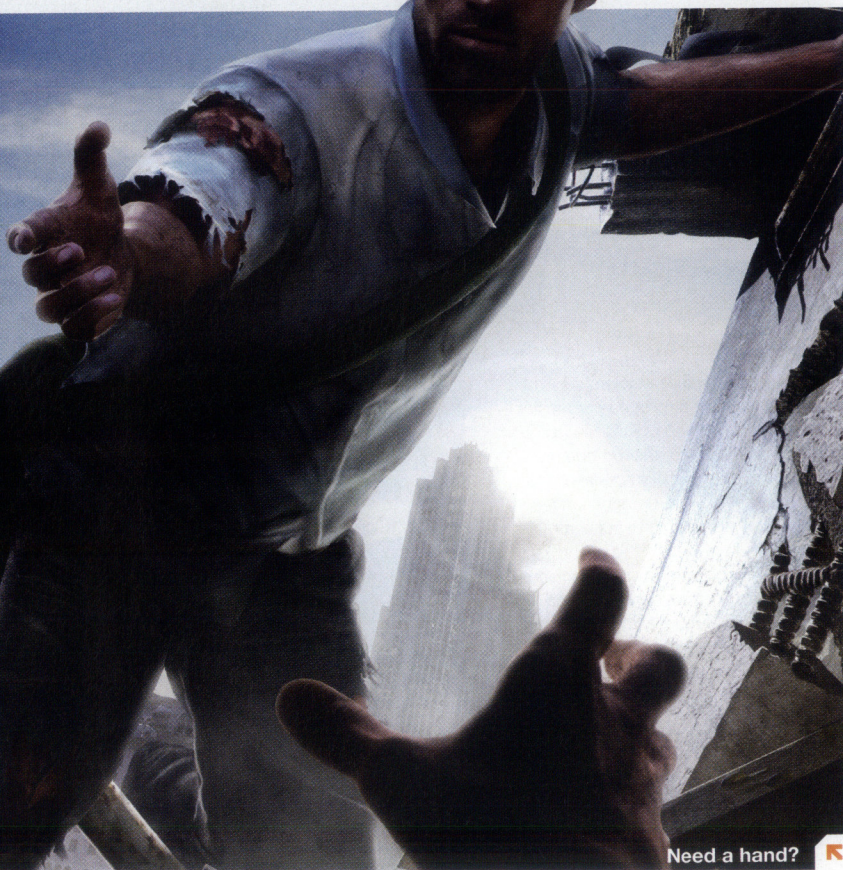
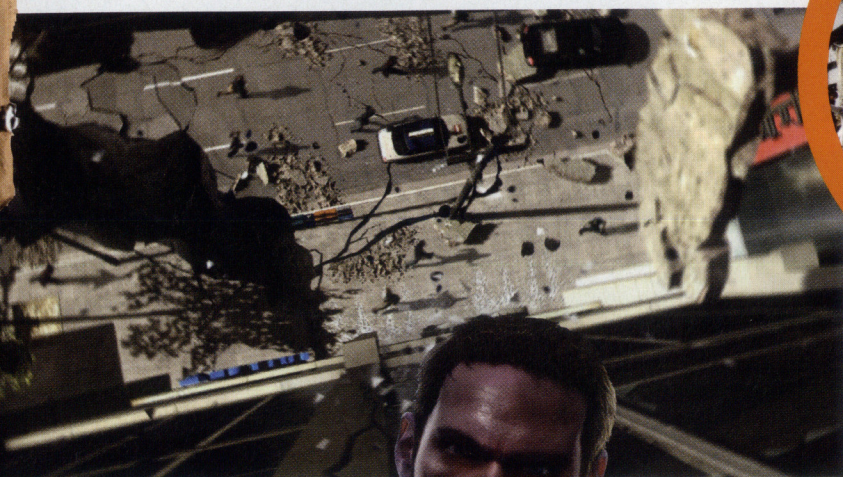
87,000 dead and 370,000 people go missing in China's south-western Sichuan province. It had a magnitude of 7.8.

26 DECEMBER 2004

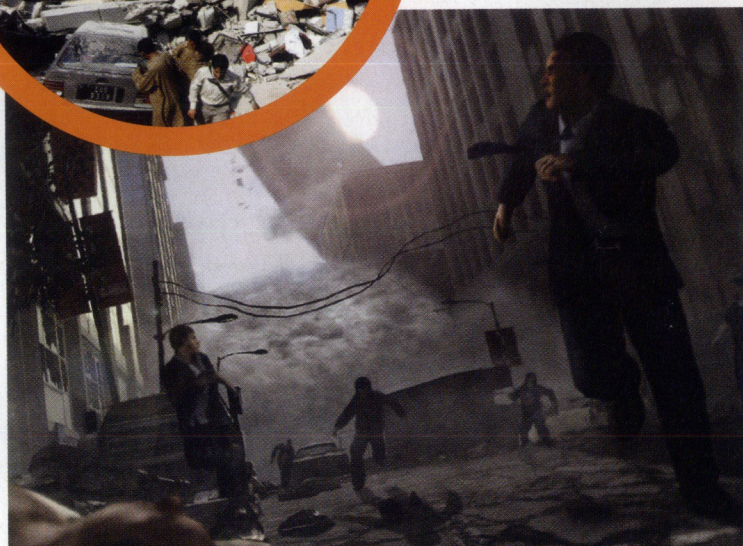
The death toll for this was immeasurable killing hundreds of thousands of people in Asia. A staggering 9.2 magnitude earthquake caused mass flooding in the region.

22 MAY 1960

Chile – the strongest earthquake recorded struck at a magnitude of 9.5. A 10-metre tsunami wiped out entire villages. It was so big it killed 61 people across the Pacific in Hawaii.



Need a hand?



Disaster movies are standard fare, but disaster games? Less common

the refugee camp and saving others. In particular, Adam will be on the steady hunt for his ex-girlfriend, Alice, who he still dotes on from afar. Will he find her and score a back-alley pash?

While you'll start off in the centre of the city roaming the streets like a hazy bum eventually more areas with different themes will open up with their own objectives. Familiar areas like parking stations, shopping centres, hospitals, and even a navy pier will be available to get up to mischief. So far there's no sign of a games store you can loot, but we can only hope.

Perhaps the most interesting design choice Darkworks has made is that the game will be played from the first person view. It seems like an odd choice for a title where you'd expect to be clamouring over concrete and steel, but they opted for it on grounds it was more immersive than the alternatives. We'll be waiting, fingers ready to stroke goatee, for a better look at how that choice is going to work out.

That sums up our feelings on *Am Alive* – it's unknown territory. The only recent game that made us this curious as to how it would turn out is *Mirror's Edge*, and that blew us away with the quality of its innovation, but left us a little tepid elsewhere.

Hopefully *Am Alive* can accomplish the same feat and combine unique gameplay elements together with a smashingly good-looking vision of chaos. Toes crossed. **James Ellis**

WE SAY

- ↑ Fresh idea
- ↑ Choices aplenty
- ↓ It's early days

OPS IS...
curiously aroused

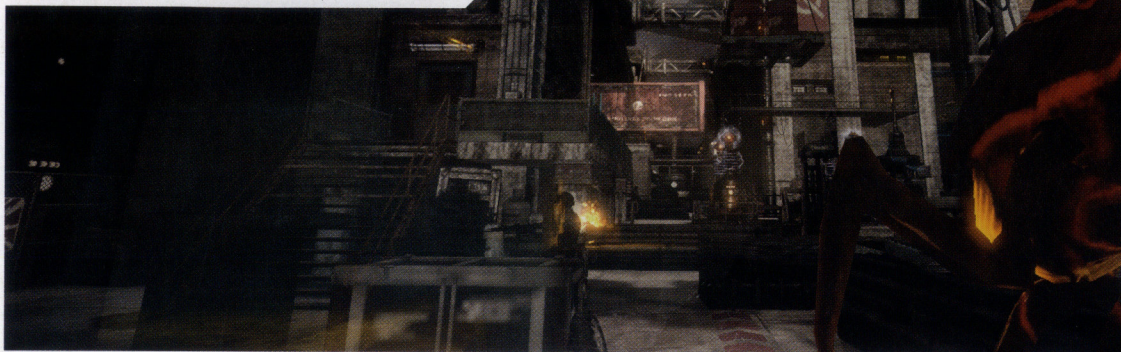


IT'S LIKE...

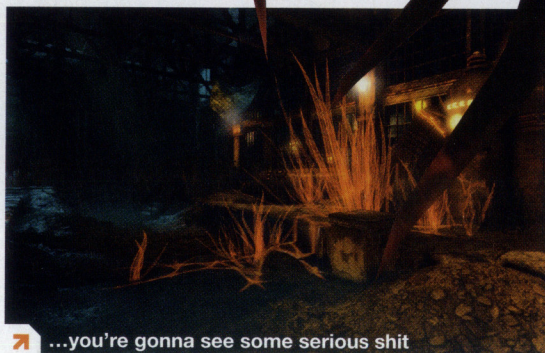
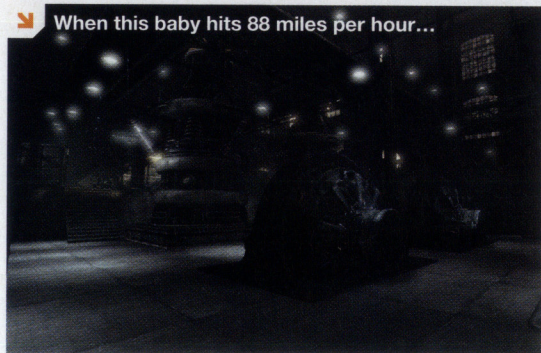
Back to the Future



Killing



When this baby hits 88 miles per hour...



...you're gonna see some serious shit

PS3 GENRE: SHOOTER | RELEASE: TBA | DISTRIBUTOR: ACTIVISION | DEVELOPER: RAVEN SOFTWARE | PLAYERS: 1-TBA

SINGULARITY

Let's do the time warp again!

Singularity is an interesting blip on the upcoming game release radar as it seems hell-bent on tapping into tried and proven game formulas while simultaneously forging its own unique approach. We've been sent an assortment of game media, but with a title that tells us nothing about its content, what the hell is *Singularity* all about?

SAME OLD, NEW OLD

In its shortest possible synopsis, *Singularity* is a first-person shooter, comparable to some same-genre heavy hitters. The level, character and weapon design all look *Half-Life 2*-inspired, while the complicated and shifting narrative is most similar to *BioShock*, with a pinch of *F.E.A.R.*'s horror element thrown in for good measure.

But this is where comparisons end as the narrated gameplay walkthrough we

were provided with sheds light on some original ideas that certainly increase the games appeal.

POINTS OF DIFFERENCE

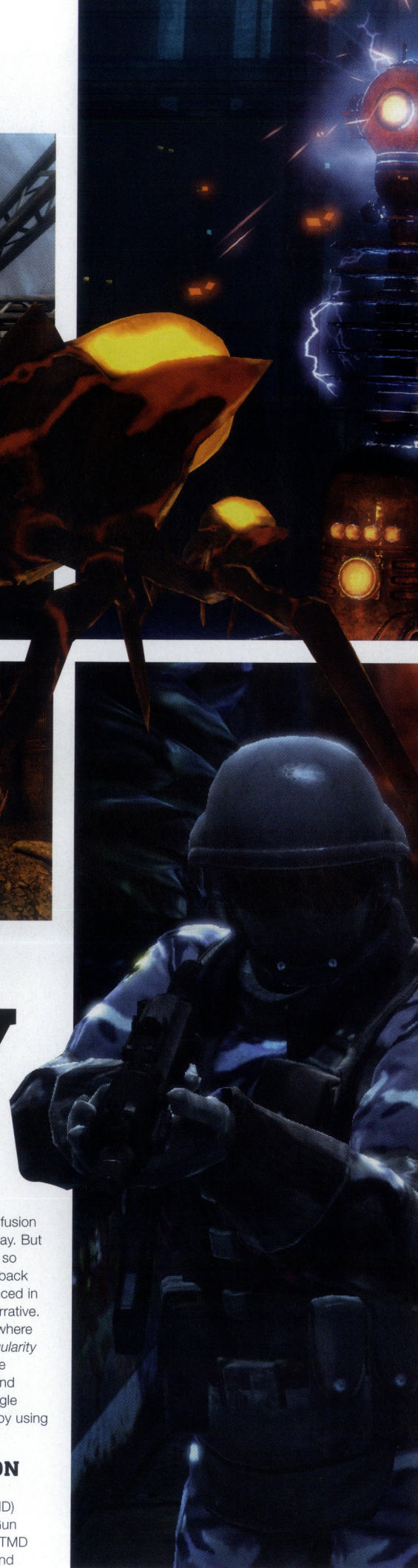
Singularity is set in the not-so-distant-future of 2010 where Nate Renko, a US reconnaissance pilot, is sent to investigate some strange readings over Mother Russia. It seems that the Cold War hasn't ended as the games protagonist finds himself on the wrong end of a planeload of flak. With his navigator now MIA, Renko awakens on the abandoned research island of Katorga 12 and the game kicks off.

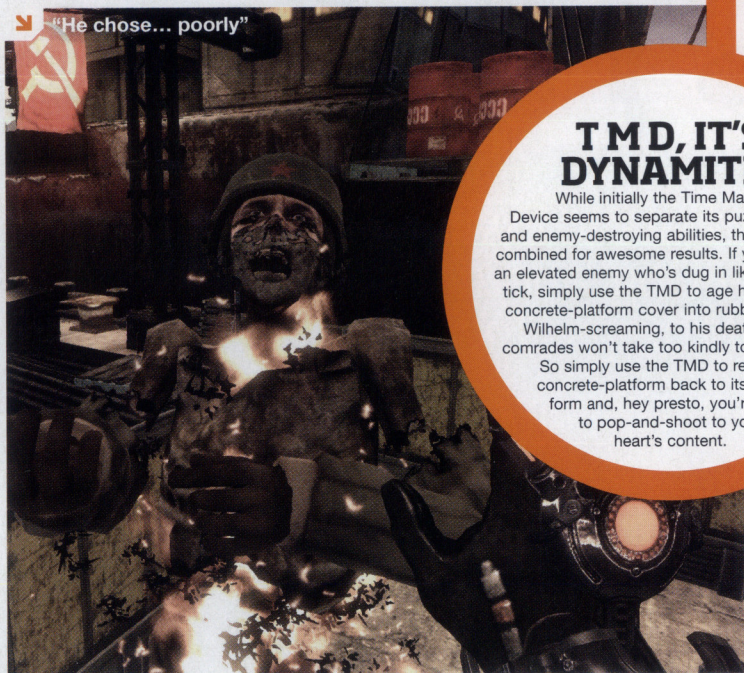
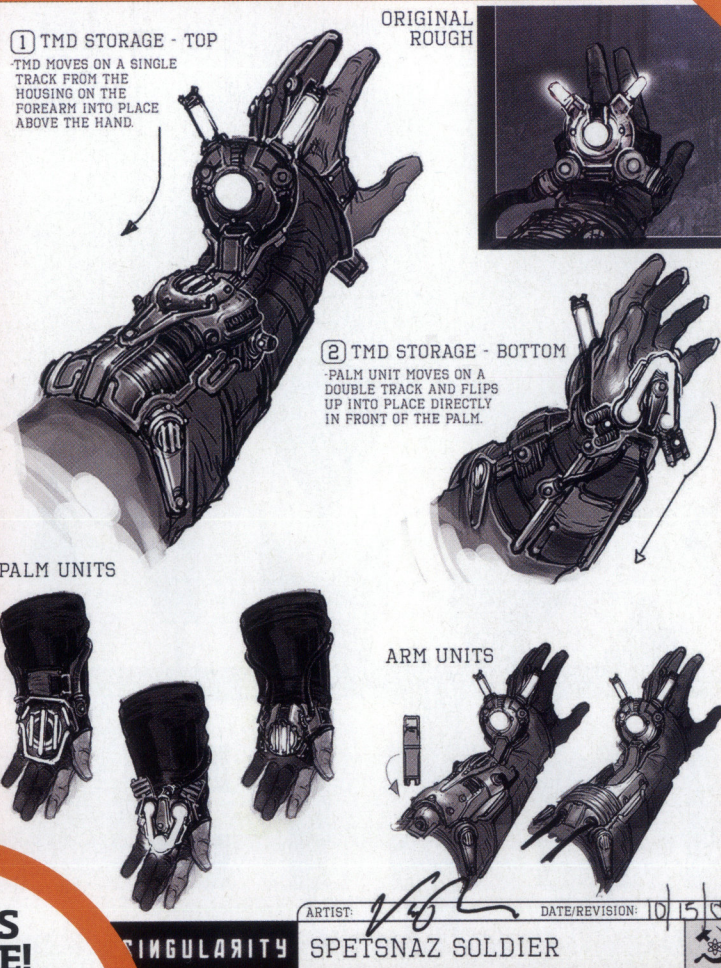
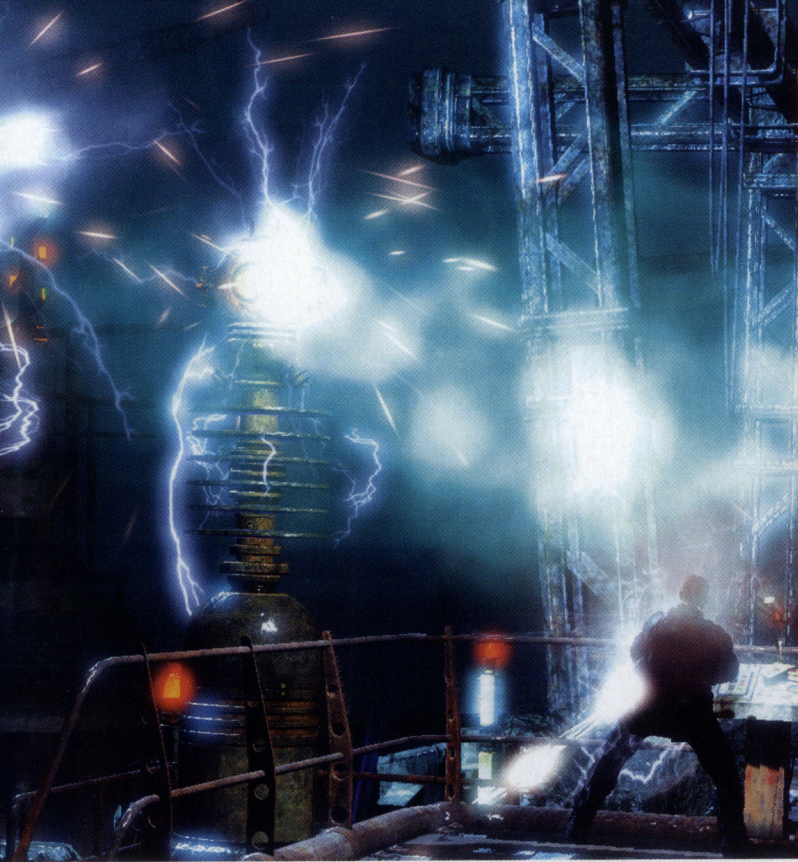
As the story unfolds, it is revealed that the large research facility on Katorga 12 wasn't abandoned; it was all but destroyed in 1950. Apparently the sneaky farkin' Russians were researching into Element 99, a form of cold fusion, before

the shit hit the fan. They've sent a mini-army of Spetsnaz soldiers to the island to try and re-open cold fusion proceedings, and you're in their way. But the 1950 story elements won't be so much learnt by exposition or flashback cutscenes as they will be experienced in gameplay as part of the overall narrative. Brace yourselves, here's the part where we all start to go cross-eyed. *Singularity* allows you to fight and uncover the mysteries of Katorga 12 in 1950 and 2010, all through the eyes of a single protagonist. How, you ask? Why, by using the TMD obviously.

TIME MANIPULATION DEVICE

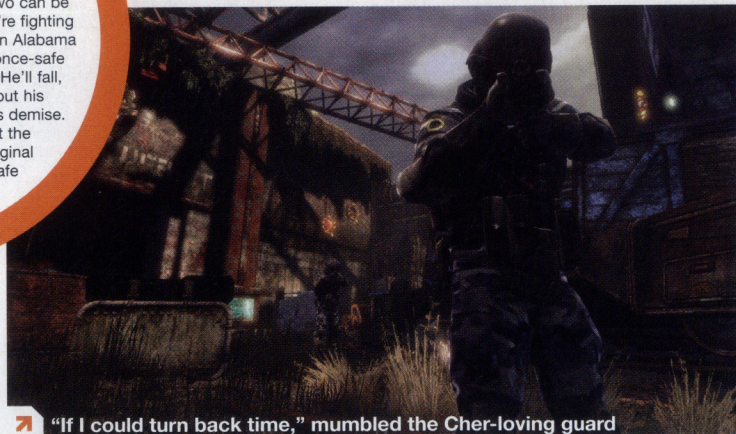
The Time Manipulation Device (TMD) is to *Singularity* what the Gravity Gun was to *Half-Life 2*. Not only is the TMD a seemingly ammo-less weapon and





TMD, IT'S DYNAMITE!

While initially the Time Manipulation Device seems to separate its puzzle-solving and enemy-destroying abilities, the two can be combined for awesome results. If you're fighting an elevated enemy who's dug in like an Alabama tick, simply use the TMD to age his once-safe concrete-platform cover into rubble. He'll fall, Wilhelm-screaming, to his death, but his comrades won't take too kindly to his demise. So simply use the TMD to revert the concrete-platform back to its original form and, hey presto, you're safe to pop-and-shoot to your heart's content.



puzzle solver, once you pick it up all other weapons will feel secondary. If the functionality of the Gravity Gun got *Prince of Persia's* Dagger of Time pregnant, the TMD would be the result. The device straps onto Renko's forearm and allows him to interact with Element 99-covered items to solve puzzles through time manipulation and fell enemies in satisfying ways; all one-handed!

For example, there's a damaged bridge in front of you; simply rewind time using the TMD and watch it reform before your eyes. How about being given a mission objective in 2010 that involves you investigating a now sunken ship? By using the TMD's restoration ability, in conjunction with jumping back and forth through 1950/2010 time portals, you can resurrect the ship to its former floating glory and investigate it without the need

to transform into Scuba Steve.

As for the TMD in combat, your options are satisfyingly varied. Surprise an enemy by using the TMD on him and age him into a pile of bones, or transform him into a future mutated mess. Locate a force field-like Deadlock (Element 99 in its purest form), and you'll be able to launch it at enemies, freezing them beneath its blue dome. You can then destroy the frozen enemies by way of a time-explosion, or use it as a shield that bullets cannot penetrate. The TMD can even be used to make once-explosive barrels volatile again for that perfect ambush.

WE ARE NOT ALONE

Russian Spetsnaz mercenaries from 2010 and facility guards in 1950 won't be the only enemies you'll have to best in *Singularity*. In the game's present day,

Element 99 has caused some strange growths on Katorga 12 that are homes for Phase Ticks; four-legged mutated creatures with bad attitudes. The TMD can be used on the Phase Ticks to revert them to their egg-like state, and then launched at enemies as an organic grenade. Shoot their Element 99 nests and a rather nasty substance will shoot out, converting anybody it touches into something that resembles post-stroke porridge.

To make matters more interesting, there's also a hear-it-but-don't-see-it beastly roaming the island that likes to do gruesome things to unsuspecting Spetsnaz soldiers. But this isn't the only mystery *Singularity* has to offer. For those interested in the complete story, you'll be able to use the TMD's Chrono-Light function to restore photographs, read blackboard messages and schematics, as

well as reveal hidden clues that are being left for you by someone in 1950 who is aware of your 2010 presence.

With the Unreal Engine 3 powering it and time-distorting combat mixed with a mind-boggling narrative, *Singularity* is shaping up to be a hot FPS title. We can't wait for some hands-on time. **Nathan Lawrence**

WE SAY

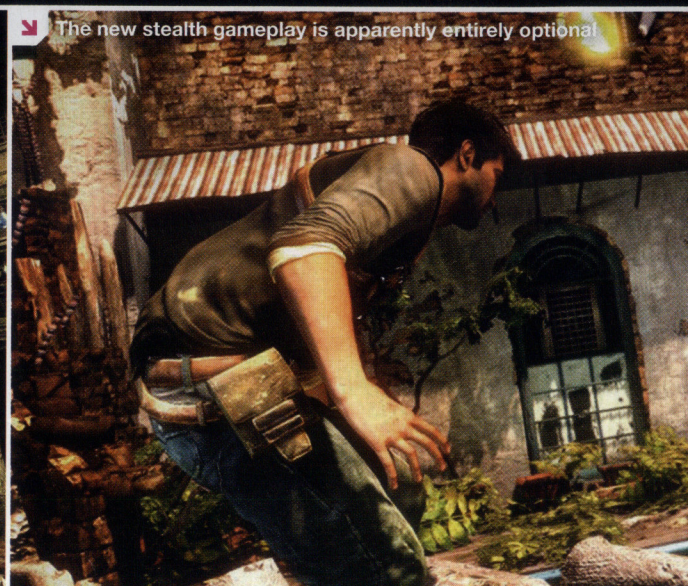
- ↑ New and interesting IP
- ↑ Time Manipulation Device
- ↑ Head-tripping narrative

OPS IS...
observing approvingly



X MARKS THE SPOT

EXCLUSIVE: *OPS* chats to Evan Wells, Co-President at Naughty Dog, about Marco Polo, Indiana Jones and all things *Uncharted 2*



The new stealth gameplay is apparently entirely optional

OPS: How have you found the response to *Uncharted*, both from the press and from gamers? Surprising, or as you'd expected?

EW: To be fair, when you're this close to a project it does become difficult to be wholly objective and anticipate the reception of the game from the players and journalists, but it isn't impossible to take a step back and consider the project from a broader point of view. We've always felt confident that we were developing a high quality experience with *Uncharted* because of the solid pedigree of everyone at Naughty Dog – even despite the challenges and compromises that accompany normal game development.

We know that keeping the player in mind as we construct all of our gameplay sequences is a key element in crafting an overall satisfying experience and, therefore, something we keep a high priority on. "How does the player feel when playing our game?" and "Do they finish it?" are an example of the big questions for us during development. Looking at our post-release data, we've found that an overwhelming amount of players have completed *Uncharted*. That tells us a lot about how successful we were to hook players into our game story and mechanics once they got the controller in their hands.

In the end, it was certainly nice to see that people also liked our game as much as we thought they would, both

vocally – on message boards and in their game reviews – and simply by choosing to complete the game.

OPS: How did the Marco Polo angle come about?

EW: To figure out the basis of the stories in our games, we look to historical mysteries that do exist and determine if we can use a loophole or unknown facts about the mystery as the foundation for a journey we might want to place Drake on. We do a lot of research into all kinds of mythological settings and artefacts, and about interesting locations all around the world. We find it really interesting, almost a puzzle sometimes, to find these mysteries and then find out more. After that, it's pretty easy to get wrapped up and start coming up with all these ideas on how we can turn that historical mystery into a story that fits into the *Uncharted* universe.

In this particular case, we were researching background on Marco Polo and discovered a few interesting facts about his life, focused upon his doomed voyage home from China in 1292. After spending almost twenty years in the court of the emperor Kublai Khan, Marco Polo departed with fourteen ships and over 600 passengers and crew – but when he arrived at his destination a year and a half later, only one ship remained, and only eighteen of the passengers had survived.

Although Marco Polo described almost every other aspect of his adventures in minute detail, he never revealed what happened to the ships that were lost. It is this deliberate omission of facts by Marco Polo which serves as the foundation for Drake's journey in *Uncharted 2*.

OPS: The subtle facial twitches and ways moves were smoothly linked with the next were a major highlight of *Uncharted*. How have these come along?

EW: The depth of our animation system in *Uncharted* was unmatched when the game was released and we've evolved our system quite a bit since then. We've increased the complexity of how we've layered our animation system so that Drake responds realistically to the world around him – not just in how the animation plays out, but in his posture, breathing and even the emotions we see on his face. For example, if Drake is approaching a group of enemies and he hasn't been spotted yet, he will adopt a stealthier, hunched over posture as he slinks around to get a drop on them. Once in a firefight, you can see that Drake will take cover and react to being shot at – he will look stressed just like you would expect. We've also made sure that our animations make sense with the physics system as well allowing us to expand our animation states to take into account new situations that we might put Drake in. For example, in *Uncharted 2* we can introduce fully realised moving objects that Drake – and any other character – can stand on top of, such as collapsing buildings and vehicles like tanks, trains and trucks, along with anything else along those lines. So we've had to add animation that shows Drake reacting to the unstable, moving terrain to fulfil our philosophy of grounding *Uncharted*, and Drake, in reality.

In addition, in *Uncharted* you may have noticed that Drake has variations in his animation states. For example, every time you take cover in our first game, we cycled through our layered animation states to make him look a little different each time. This is a concept that worked very well for us in *Uncharted* and we've only improved and expanded upon it for this new game. Basically, we've increased the number of layers we can use to add even more

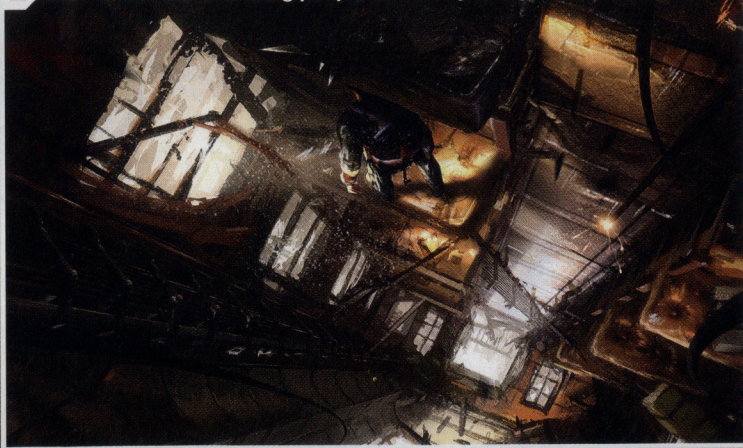
variety to any animation state for Drake and create contextual movements that are firmly grounded in whatever situation Drake finds himself in.

OPS: Like many gamers, we were lucky enough to play through *Uncharted* before the twist was spoiled for us. *Uncharted* is a shining example of pace done right – just when we're almost over skulking about, picking off baddies and solving puzzles you gave us an MP40 and switched it up. How do you follow this up in the sequel?

EW: There's nothing better to getting pace right than having someone play the game. We do a wealth of playtesting throughout development to help us identify places pacing might have gone wrong and to fine tune great levels to make them just that much more satisfying. Our extensive playtesting is a combination of quantity – we do a heck of a lot of it – and quality – we track a ton of statistics to help us make the right changes to our game. I can't even begin to tell you how much we track – it's everything from how long it took them to go through an environment, which paths they took through an environment (be it exploration or combat), how they solved or didn't solve a puzzle, how many times they died, where the choke points were in a level, where players got stuck in a level, how long they spent in cover, how many shots they fired... I could keep going for quite some time.

This worked really well for us in *Uncharted*, as you mention, and we've only expanded on what data we're gathering during playtesting with *Uncharted 2*. Some of the new data comes from how we've given players the choice to approach nearly every situation in the game via different methods and even multiple paths through the same environment. Other data that we're tracking for the first time is a result of the experiences we got from developing *Uncharted* and things we realised we wanted to track but may not have had time to implement it correctly or effectively. All of these tools, which includes first hand accounts of the gameplay experience from our testers – those are super important too – will help us evolve our pacing and overall gameplay experience from the great foundation we

Look down: the first thing people do when you say, "Don't look down"



"Oh yeah? I'll tuck my shirt in when I'm good and ready, mate!"



CHLOE

Drake has a new bit of crumpet for his next adventure, Bond-style, but she's not just window-dressing. "She's an experienced fortune-hunter herself, and Drake's equal in every way," explains Evan Wells. "But she's also more impulsive and reckless than he is, which makes her both exciting and a little unpredictable."

have with *Uncharted* to an even better level in *Uncharted 2*.

It's not all about playtesting either – you have to start from something that's already top notch to begin with, otherwise you're just going to continually fix and tweak something and it'll probably end up just being a mess in the end. Having a sharp sense of pacing in story and game design is one of the key elements to our games and something we are keen on retaining from *Uncharted* into *Uncharted 2*. We strive to achieve movie-like pacing to our games – we want the players to get into a flow and feel like they can't wait to see what happens next. This means carefully crafting our story and our gameplay to avoid situations that make players put the controller down and walk away from the game. It's our goal with *Uncharted 2* to create an experience where you start playing and then the next thing you realise is that you've completed the game and it's many, many hours later.

OPS: The first party PS3 titles are easily to best looking on the system, and *Uncharted* is regarded by many as the best looking first-party title on the system. What sort of expectations does that place on the team and the sequel?

EW: We expect a lot from ourselves as it is! Naughty Dog has a long tradition of pushing PlayStation hardware to the limits for the past 13 years and we are continuing this tradition with *Uncharted 2*. After we shipped *Uncharted*, we met with all the programmers and gave them an

opportunity to explore whatever direction in their work they might want to pursue. Just about everybody went right to work on tweaking and adding new features to our engine as their first order of business. As a result, we're able to utilise more power from the PlayStation 3 by optimising our SPU code. With *Uncharted 2*, the Naughty Dog Engine 2.0 simply enables us to do more, do it better and do it faster. We can display more polygons on screen than in *Uncharted*, increasing the number of enemies we can show on screen and allowing us to create environments with unprecedented detail. Our lighting and shadowing systems have been overhauled. Rendering skies has been revamped to include more realistic light effects and a procedural layer to our cloud system. We're pushing the snow rendering like we did with water from the first game – if we're going to do snow, we feel that it's got to be the best snow you've ever seen! We have added sub-surface scattering with our ice, frost and snow. We're also taking on fur and cloth this time.

OPS: Can we speak about the new stealth mechanic a little? What sort of dynamic does this add?

EW: Simply put, our action-stealth mechanic is all about adding complexity, expanding player choice in our combat situations and fleshing out our enemy AI system. "Action" represents the idea that we're trying to keep the pace up, and "stealth" represents the tactics we're familiar with regarding taking out enemies

unnoticed. We don't want to introduce the frustration of being forced to move at the game's (presumably slower) pace by replaying and replaying a set-up due to falling a stealth-heavy situation.

Providing the option of action-stealth allows the player the choice to get more invested in the set-ups, getting to know more about the environments than a straight gunfight would allow. It also allows us to embed more narrative and story into the gameplay. By showing what enemies are doing before you're engaged in combat and by overhearing some background conversations, you'll be able to see more of the story in context to the environment or situation. It also reinforces the story needs by allowing us to make set-ups more appropriate to the tone of the story. Is Drake infiltrating an area? Are the enemies already in defensive positions? Whatever the story needs, we can have the enemies parallel that feeling now.

As a result of expanding our gameplay to account for action-stealth, we've changed up the dynamics of how a player approaches a combat situation by adding new behaviours to enemies: an investigate behaviour and a hunting behaviour. With the investigate behaviour, the enemies have peripheral vision just like humans. When Drake enters this peripheral vision the enemies will look over in the direction they think they saw him, and depending on how long he was in this vision cone, they may just look or they may walk over and check out what they think they saw. The hunt behaviour is experienced when the enemies have already spotted Drake and are engaged in combat with him. While in combat the enemies make certain assumptions on where Drake is, based on his last known location. If they lose eye contact with Drake for a few seconds, one or more enemies will start hunting around the area, starting with his last known location, and then spread their search out if he's not found. Our battles can be switched up from straightforward gun fights to an action-stealth battle midway through, picking off each enemy one by one as they separate in their hunt for Drake.

This just further reinforces our focus on creating player choice in *Uncharted 2*

We're sincerely hoping for AT LEAST one Nazi to make an appearance



Think about it: *Raiders*, *The Last Crusade*, Nazis



and "choice" is the other key word here. We've implemented the new action-stealth mechanics with the knowledge that not everyone likes stealth game play. We're just giving the player more options.

OPS: Was the decision for a new female lead a no-brainer? We liked Elena a lot, and the relationship she had with Drake felt believable. Plus, she was cute and didn't have giant boobs, which was refreshing.

EW: We thought it was important for Chloe, as Drake's new romantic interest, to reflect different aspects of his character than we saw when he was with Elena – she's definitely not intended to just slot into the same role that Elena inhabited. Unlike Elena, whom Drake was just getting to know over the course of the first game, Chloe and Drake have a long personal history, and a more complex relationship. She's an experienced fortune-hunter herself, and Drake's equal in every way – but she's also more impulsive and reckless than he is, which makes her both exciting and a little unpredictable.

We also knew we had something during our casting process for *Uncharted 2*. We tend to run our story and cinematics production more like you would for film or television. We cast the characters very carefully, bringing the actors in for traditional auditions, including call-backs. For instance, when we were looking to cast Chloe for *Uncharted 2*, we had Claudia come in to read with Nolan. We could tell immediately that they not only clicked in character, but they were on the same wavelength – with a similar sense of humour – out of character as well. We knew instantly that Claudia was the perfect fit.

OPS: We guess Indiana Jones had a new gal for each flick, though? Well, except the last one we guess. Do you see Drake discovering aliens when he's 70?

EW: Drake is someone who is constantly in motion, almost like an adrenaline junkie whose curiosity to solve mysteries will have him setting off on the kinds of fantastic, yet treacherous journeys in *Uncharted* and *Uncharted 2* for quite some time.

OPS: You've said the *Uncharted 2* explores the shadier side of Drake, who apparently

can be a bit of a 'jerk'. Could you elaborate a little on this? Is adding extra layers, especially unflattering ones, hard to do without alienating players? Obviously we still need to like Drake, right?

EW: By the time the story of *Uncharted 2* begins, we'll see that Drake is clearly in a different place than where we last left him. He even looks a bit rougher around the edges – he definitely begins more 'down on his luck' than we saw him at the end of the first game. We're also showing Drake in his natural element and revealing peculiarities of the characters that Drake has surrounded himself with. If you were a criminal in the modern day treasure-hunting world, you are going to rub elbows with some pretty shady characters. What kind of friends would you have? What kind of lovers? How do all your relationships play out? These are the questions we want to explore.

Don't think that means this is a different Drake at all, we're just tackling some more serious themes and digging deeper into Drake's character. He's still the same affable rogue with a constantly light-hearted attitude which we've come to like in *Uncharted*. Humour is a critical part of our franchise and it remains a key component to the story throughout *Uncharted 2*.

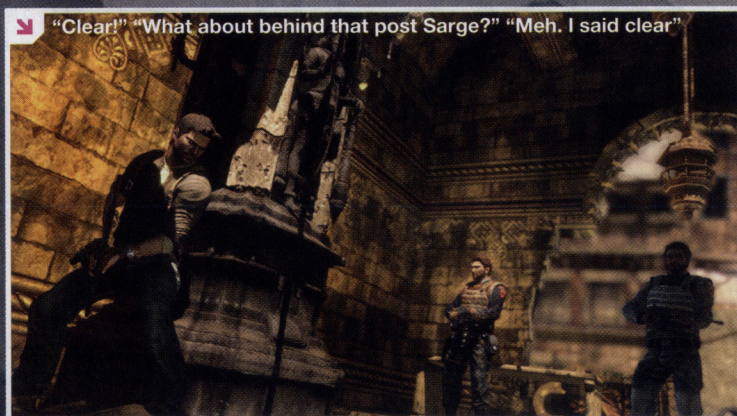
OPS: Naughty Dog really hasn't made a dud for as long as we can remember – there are a great many of us here that have fond memories of the *Jak* series, and *Crash Bandicoot 3* truly is one of the best pure platformers ever. Is it satisfying to look back over such a well-regarded catalogue of titles? What's necessary at the studio level to maintain such a great strike rate?


EW: First of all, thank you for the kind words. Flattery will get you everywhere! We like to think that our unique culture, highly collaborative development process and, of course, some of the best talent in the business all help to contribute to the continued success of all our games. We don't have a formal hierarchy at the studio – not only is everyone responsible for their own tasks and their own time, we also encourage everyone to provide feedback to any aspect of the game they might have an opinion about, even if it's not within their

core discipline. It's happened more often than we can count when someone from a different department has contributed significantly to another aspect of our game throughout development. We saw it happen during *Uncharted* and we're seeing it happen nearly every week as we're working on *Uncharted 2*. It also helps that many of the Naughty Dogs have years of experience in interactive entertainment – we even have a group of people with solid backgrounds in the film and animation industries – so everyone really is at the top of their game. I'll tell you, it's a good thing we don't really have a formal hierarchy, because everyone here could pretty much be leading a department anywhere else! We're always looking for talent, so if anyone out there is interested in joining the Naughty Dog team, please look us up! 


“Naughty Dog has a long tradition of pushing PlayStation hardware to the limits for the past 13 years”

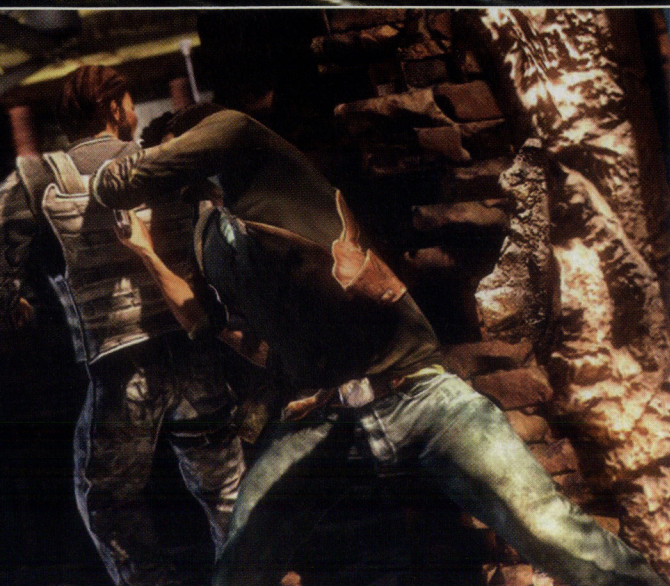
Evan Wells



The snow levels will be a seismic shift away from the original's jungle 



 Temple of Doom, Crystal Skull, no Nazis. Wait, Temple of Doom was good, we guess



99 GAMES YOU MUST PLAY IN 2009

2009. It's the year of the PS3

if you believe the hype. It's hard not to, honestly. We thought last year was hectic, but that was before we glanced at what's in store for us over the next 12 months. We're through the looking glass now, people. Now we're going to start seeing what the PS3 is truly capable of. You've seen *Killzone 2* already, but wait until you

wrap your laughing gear around the likes of *Heavy Rain*, *Uncharted 2* and *Gran Turismo 5* - and they're just the exclusives. The 99 games that follow are by no means a comprehensive round up of EVERY game due to hit shelves this year. Some of them will no doubt slip until 2010. Some of them are exist only in speculation. Some of them, unfortunately, will suck. All

unavoidable. This list doesn't account for surprises either. There are a lot of development studios around the globe, and there are plenty of them unaccounted for at the moment. They're all working on something or other - the question is what?

The second question? How the frack are we going to find time to burn through all these bad boys?

99 GAMES YOU MUST PLAY IN 2009



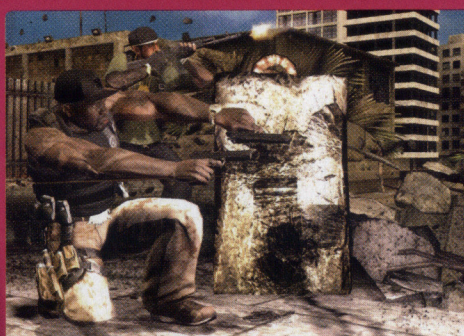
2 DAYS TO VEGAS

PUBLISHER: TBC
DEVELOPER: Steel Monkeys

OUT: Early 2009
The incredibly mysterious 2 Days To Vegas has been in development for donkey's years without a publisher. It's an action-adventure set in a number of US cities over a 48-hour period. Shooting, car chases, that kind of stuff. According to Steel Monkeys' website the game will be ready early this year. We'll believe it when we see it.

“Oh, and we're fairly certain you can cut a man in twain. Sweet”

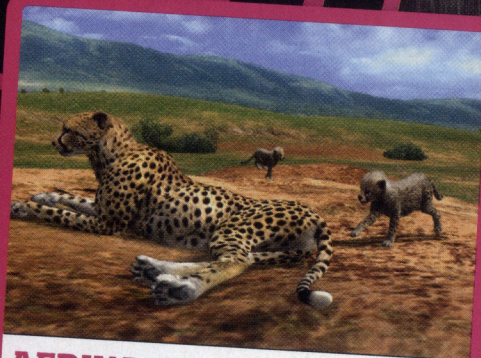
Afro Samurai



50 CENT: BLOOD ON THE SAND

PUBLISHER: THQ
DEVELOPER: Swordfish Studios
OUT: February 2009

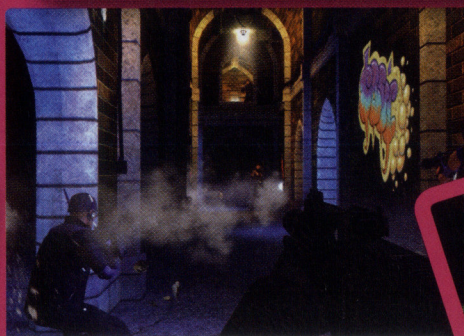
This game is out very shortly, if not already. Short story? 50 Cent shoots his way through a sand-covered country, taking on the terrorists that stole his diamond-encrusted skull. Yes, you read that right. It has a swear button and it plays like *The Club*. Blaxploitation is back, baby.



AFRIKA

PUBLISHER: Sony
DEVELOPER: Rhino Studios
OUT: TBC

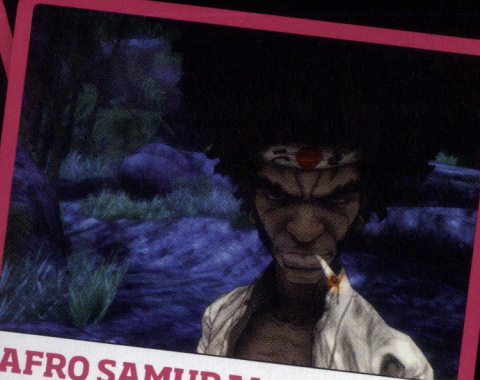
This 'Asian territory exclusive' is going to be released in North America, so there's a good chance it'll make it down under. As a photojournalist you'll need to take images of various animals. It's a virtual safari. One where you don't have to be worried that there's a lion hiding in your Land Rover eager to mung on your face.



THE AGENCY

PUBLISHER: Sony Online Entertainment
DEVELOPER: SOE Seattle
OUT: TBC 2009

The Agency is a spy-themed massively multiplayer online shooter. With first-person and third-person views, the ability to switch roles depending on what gear you wear and the option to form 'Joint Agencies' (Guilds, basically), *The Agency* seems like the result of a merger between *World of Warcraft* and the CIA.



AFRO SAMURAI

PUBLISHER: Atari
DEVELOPER: Namco Bandai
OUT: Early 2009

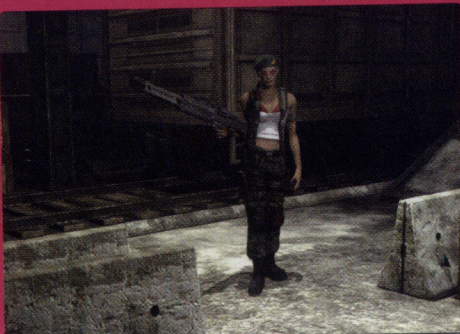
The cult-classic anime featuring Samuel L. Jackson as the titular sword-slinger is due to hit PS3 shortly. It's pretty bloody, if initial impressions are anything to go by, and the cel-shading means it remains faithful to the source material. Oh, and we're fairly certain you can cut a man in twain. Sweet.



ALIENS: COLONIAL MARINES

PUBLISHER: SEGA
DEVELOPER: Gearbox Software
OUT: Early 2009

Gearbox, surely one of the busiest developers in the world, is set to deliver this FPS based in the Aliens universe. It'll feature a four-player co-op mode, which is nice. The face-huggers still look like leaping vaginas, by the way. That ought to raise some eyebrows.



ALPHA PROTOCOL

PUBLISHER: SEGA
DEVELOPER: Obsidian Entertainment
OUT: TBC 2009

2009 seems likely for this spy 'em up from SEGA. After a mission goes awry, Michael Thorton is cut off from all of his contacts and betrayed by his superiors. An action-RPG, *Alpha Protocol* combines action with extensive dialogue options. The consequences of choices made during conversations may not be seen until much later.

ALIEN RPG (UNTITLED)

PUBLISHER: SEGA
DEVELOPER: Obsidian Entertainment
OUT: TBC 2009

It's an age ago now, but an untitled Alien RPG was announced mid-last year. In December it was revealed Obsidian was working on it. We're not sure it'll make this year (Obsidian is also working on *Alpha Protocol*, and SEGA states the first Alien-licensed game won't arrive before 2009) but we're hedging our bets.

ASSASSIN'S CREED 2

PUBLISHER: Ubisoft
DEVELOPER: Ubisoft Montreal
OUT: TBA 2009

Ubisoft Montreal is hard at work on the sequel to the 2007 surprise hit that went on to become the fastest selling new IP since *The Getaway* (Sony, why exactly did you cancel that series again?). What does anyone know about it? Nothing. Speculation points to a French Revolution setting, but we're not sure on what basis.

INDEPTH

99 games you must play in 2009

AVATAR

PUBLISHER: Ubisoft
DEVELOPER: TBC
OUT: Late 2009

James Cameron has stopped dicking around in the ocean to step back behind the camera of a major motion picture. Seriously, we know nothing about this game, but did you know Sam Worthington is in the movie? Talk about landing on your feet. Nice work, Wortho.

THE BEATLES

PUBLISHER: EA
DEVELOPER: Harmonix
OUT: Late 2009

One of the greatest acts of all time get the *Rock Band* treatment, although without the *Rock Band* name. *The Beatles*, rather, is a standalone game in its own right. Word is it'll cover the span of The Beatles' career and we expect, like *Rock Band*, it'll be compatible with most music game peripherals.

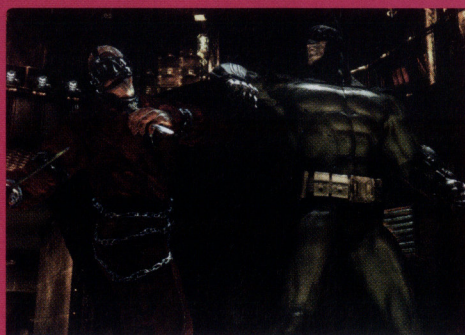
“As brilliant as Double Fine's last game was, *Psychonauts* sold really, really badly”

Brütal Legend

BIOSHOCK 2: SEA OF DREAMS

PUBLISHER: 2K
DEVELOPER: 2K Marin/Boston
OUT: Late 2009

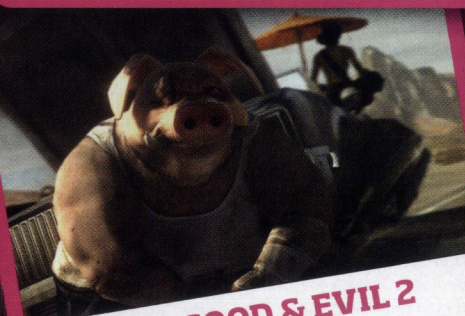
This retro-futuristic epic is being developed by the newly-formed 2K Marin, and fans are concernd. Can it live up to the first *BioShock* if it's made by a different team? Considering this is a sacred cash cow for 2K, we can safely expect more of the same.



BATMAN: ARKHAM ASYLUM

PUBLISHER: Atari
DEVELOPER: Rocksteady Studios
OUT: Mid 2009

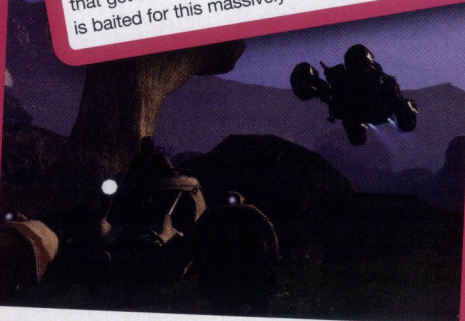
A cross between *The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape from Butcher Bay* and *BioShock*? Written by Paul Dini (*Batman: The Animated Series*)? Developed by the creators of *Urban Chaos: Riot Response*? Seriously, how can this game fail?



BEYOND GOOD & EVIL 2

PUBLISHER: Ubisoft
DEVELOPER: Ubisoft Montpellier
OUT: TBC 2009

To be honest, we'd be a fraction surprised if *Beyond Good & Evil 2* didn't slip until next year. About as surprised as we were when it was announced in the first place. Critically acclaimed, but poor-selling games that get sequels are rarer than blue moons; our breath is baited for this massively single-player extravaganza!



BORDERLANDS

PUBLISHER: 2K
DEVELOPER: Gearbox Software
OUT: TBC 2009

Think *Mad Max*... with aliens! *Borderlands* promises unlimited replay value, thanks to its randomly-generated guns, monsters, and missions. Weapons will include pistols that fire shotgun shells and rifles that make things explode just by pointing at them. With designs by Aussie legend Ron 'Star Wars' Cobb, this could rock and rule.



BAYONETTA

PUBLISHER: SEGA
DEVELOPER: PlatinumGames
OUT: TBA 2009

Hideki Kamiya, the creator of the *Devil May Cry* series, returns to the genre with *Bayonetta*, a shoot and slash action-fest starring a witch packing heat on her hands and feet. Also, her outfit is made from her hair, which she can attack enemies with (leaving her naked by the look of it). Hideki Kamiya is Japanese, for clarification.



BIONIC COMMANDO

PUBLISHER: Capcom
DEVELOPER: GRIN
OUT: Early 2009

Remakes of retro classics usually blow chunks, but this one could be different. You are Nathan 'RAD' Spencer, a man with the power to shoot a ninja rope out of his bulging cyborg arm, swinging through the shattered urban canyons of Ascension City. Only time will tell if the rope-swinging play mechanic works in 3D.



BRÜTAL LEGEND

PUBLISHER: EA
DEVELOPER: Double Fine Studios
OUT: Late 2009

As brilliant as Double Fine's last game was, *Psychonauts* sold really, really badly. Serious props then to EA for recognising the genius of Tim Schafer and his crew, and backing this Jack Black-voiced heavy metal epic to the hilt. Command your army of roadie minions, and do battle with the forces of evil!

99 GAMES YOU MUST PLAY IN 2009

CALL OF DUTY: MODERN WARFARE 2

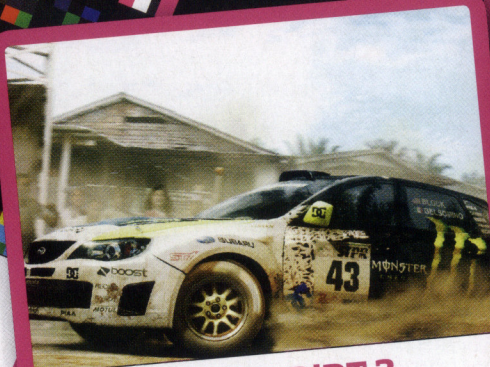
PUBLISHER: Activision
DEVELOPER: Infinity Ward
OUT: Late 2009

No details of this game have been released, other than its name. No more are needed. The first CoD: *Modern Warfare* was the best-selling game of '07, by virtue of its incredibly graphics, blistering action, and rock-solid multiplayer. Even if this is a mission pack, it will rule.

CALL OF JUAREZ: BOUND IN BLOOD

PUBLISHER: Ubisoft
DEVELOPER: Techland
OUT: TBC 2009

A prequel to the surprisingly okay Wild West first-person shooter *Call of Juarez*. Once again you'll get the chance to take control of two different characters distinguished by special abilities; we can safely expect the stealth, sniping, and bullet time elements to return.



COLIN MCRAE: DIRT 2

PUBLISHER: Atari
DEVELOPER: Codemasters
OUT: TBC 2009

True story: Former OPS dep ed Mark Serrells' dad is one of the firemen who was at the scene where Colin McRae's helicopter crashed. As a tribute to the late, great master of rally, Codies will be including the likeness of Mr. McRae in this sequel. Considering how good the first *DiRT* was, even a rehash would be rad.

“...it's basically about this dude who goes on a package tour of hell”

Dante's Inferno



DAMNATION

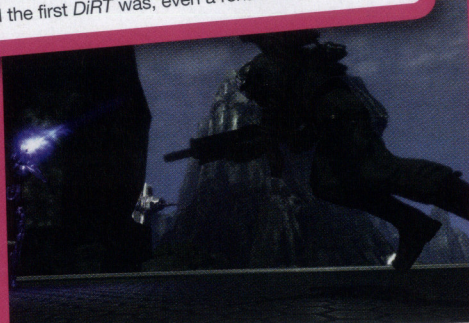
PUBLISHER: Atari
DEVELOPER: Blue Omega
OUT: Early 2009

The tech has been available for a while now to create gargantuan levels that stretch in three dimensions. The big question is whether Blue Omega has been able to balance the gameplay that lets you fly, drive, glide, and balance the game through these humongous vistas. Oh, and it's 'steam punk', just like *Wild Wild West*. Hmm...

DANTE'S INFERNO

PUBLISHER: EA
DEVELOPER: EA Redwood Shores
OUT: TBC 2009

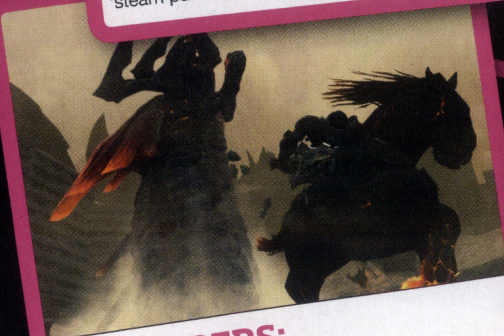
The book's a little heavy going, but it's basically about this dude who goes on a package tour of hell. The deeper you go, the more evil the sinners, and at the very bottom: Satan. It's structured perfectly for a video game, and since the studio that did *Dead Space* is behind *DI*, we can expect it to be truly... wicked!



DARK VOID

PUBLISHER: TBC
DEVELOPER: Capcom/Airtight Games
OUT: TBC 2009

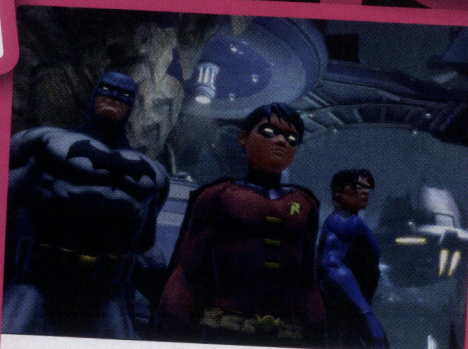
There's a lot of love out there for *Crimson Skies*, and much lamentation that the Xbox classic never got a sequel. Well, this is it. It's the same creative team, and the same play style: Run-and-gun action + buzzing around in flying machines. If you pine for a deeper, single-player version of *Warhawk*, then you're in luck.



DARKSIDERS: WRATH OF WAR

PUBLISHER: THQ
DEVELOPER: Vigil Studios
OUT: Mid 2009

It must be the year for adaptations of classic books. First there was *Dante's Inferno* (see above), and now there's *Darksiders*, based on the crazy stuff at the back of the Bible. As one of the Four Horsemen of War, you have to fight angels and demons. On horseback. Epic!



DC UNIVERSE ONLINE

PUBLISHER: Sony Online Entertainment
DEVELOPER: Sony Online Austin
OUT: TBC 2009

Will this be just another MMO disaster? Another black hole for gamer hours and venture capital? Not if Chris Cao and Shawn Lord, creators of *EverQuest*, have anything to say about it. The fruit of their labour will let thousands of gamers romp through Gotham City and Metropolis, fighting crime... or committing it!



DESTROY ALL HUMANS! PATH OF THE FURON

PUBLISHER: THQ
DEVELOPER: Sandblast Games
OUT: Early 2009

Alien invaders Crypto and Pox are back, and this time they're romping through a mash-up of 1970s popular culture. On foot or in your UFO, you can molest humans with better ray guns and new mental powers, while completing the open world missions in any order.



DISGAEA 3 ABSENCE OF JUSTICE

PUBLISHER: Ubisoft
DEVELOPER: Square Enix/Nippon Ichi
OUT: Early 2009

Games of turn-based tactical combat can be addictive. When they've got a killer story, doubly so. Thanks to its completely revamped play mechanics and hilarious dialogue, this is the most accessible *Disgaea* yet. If you dig *Fire Emblem*, give this cult hit a go.



DUKE NUKEM FOREVER

PUBLISHER: Take-Two
DEVELOPER: 3D Realms
OUT: 'When it's done'

It's been a long time between drinks for the pimp-tacular king for FPS sexism. Having won multiple vaporware awards for its stubborn refusal to materialise, *DNF* may never, ever see the light of day. On the plus side, 3D Realms boss George Broussard now has a Twitter, so he can lie to us more frequently.



DOOM 4

PUBLISHER: EA
DEVELOPER: id
OUT: TBA 2009

The breakthrough success of the first-person shooter genre is set to return before 2010. *Doom 4* will be a showcase for id's new id Tech 5 graphics engine, the same technology being used to create the phenomenal-looking *RAGE*. No plot has been revealed, but id already wants to make a movie based on it.



DRIVER 5 (UNTITLED)

PUBLISHER: Ubisoft
DEVELOPER: Ubisoft Reflections
OUT: TBA 2009

Fate has not been kind to this franchise. While the first *Driver* practically invented the whole driving-around-in-the-city-doing-missions genre, fans never forgave the brand for the ambitiously misshapen mess that was *Driver 3*. While its existence has been confirmed, details about it are not.



DYNASTY WARRIORS: GUNDAM 2

PUBLISHER: THQ
DEVELOPER: Koei, Omega Force
OUT: Early 2009

We're not going to pretend to understand the appeal of this fusion of two of the geekiest franchises in existence: feudal Chinese battle sims and plastic space robots. But we must grudgingly accept its popularity. Fans can expect improved AI and tougher bosses.

EA SPORTS FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 4

PUBLISHER: EA
DEVELOPER: EA Vancouver
OUT: Mid 2009

More than a gripping simulation of boxing, this is the sweatiest slugfest money can buy. *Round 4* will star over 40 licensed fighters, including Mike 'Ear-biter' Tyson, Muhammad 'Cassius' Ali, Joe 'the Gorilla' Frazier, Lennox Lewis, and, er, Winky Wright.

“George Broussard now has a Twitter, so he can lie to us more frequently”

Duke Nukem Forever

EA SPORTS TENNIS (WORKING TITLE)

PUBLISHER: EA
DEVELOPER: EA
TBC: Late 2009

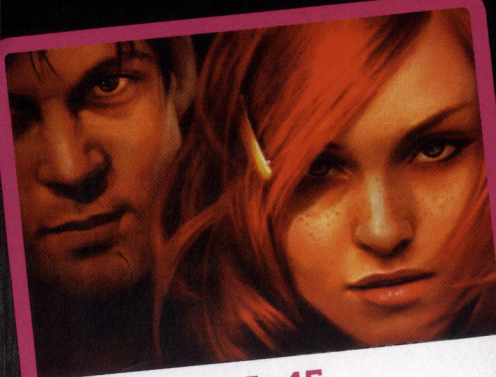
EA Sports president Peter Moore must have stoned the size of medicine balls. This brand new tennis franchise will debut on the Wii first, going head to head with Nintendo's unassailable *Wii Sports*. Expect stars on the box, top 40 hits, and rock-solid gameplay.



EAT LEAD: THE RETURN OF MATT HAZARD

PUBLISHER: AFA
DEVELOPER: Vicious Cycle Software
OUT: Early 2009

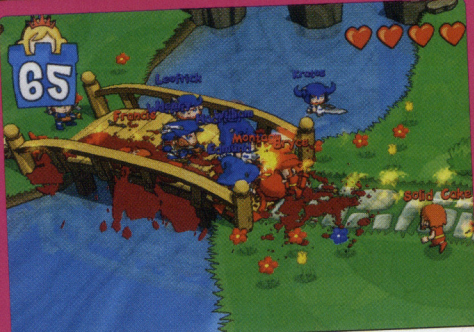
Duke Nuke Forever (see above) is such a joke, someone's gone and made a piss-take of it. Matt Hazard is a washed-up action hero from a bygone era of gaming, who's coming out of retirement for one last shot at action star glory. Should be good for a giggle.



FAITH AND A .45

PUBLISHER: TBA
DEVELOPER: Deadline Games
OUT: TBA 2009

Someone else must hold the rights to Bonnie & Clyde, because Luke & Ruby have stolen their shtick in all but name. Tooling around the dustbowls of Depression-era America, these partners in crime rob banks whilst simultaneously sticking it to the man. A 'cinematic', 'gritty', and 'emotional' shooter, it'll also have co-op.



FAT PRINCESS (PSN)

PUBLISHER: Aony
DEVELOPER: Titan
OUT: Mid 2009

The premise of this game of top-down tactical combat is delicious! Two medieval-themed teams each start with the enemy team's princess their prisoner. They must balance their efforts between rescuing their own princess and fattening up their captive to make her harder to rescue. A PSN classic in the making!

“Herd a herd of impressionable sheep back to your mothership.”

Flock! (PSN)



F.E.A.R. 2: PROJECT ORIGIN

PUBLISHER: Warner Bros. Interactive
DEVELOPER: Monolith Productions
OUT: Early 2009

More black ops FPS action, set in a world slowly being turned inside-out by the mental power of a very crazy, very evil little girl. Monolith has promised a greater variety of enemies, and more open environments, thanks to the mass devastation caused by Alma in the first game. If you like bullet time, you'll love this.

99 GAMES YOU MUST PLAY IN 2009



FINAL FANTASY XIII

PUBLISHER: Ubisoft
DEVELOPER: Square Enix
OUT: TBC 2009 (in Japan anyway)

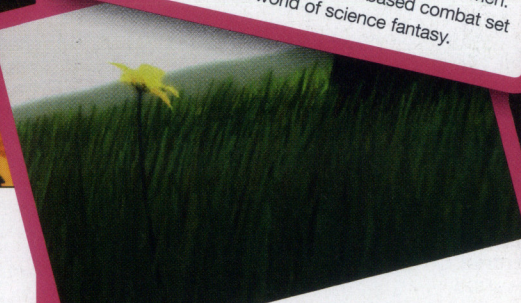
Thanks to the super-slick rendering of Crystal Tools, Square's custom game development engine, the next *Final Fantasy* will make it harder than ever for us to tell the female characters apart from the effeminate men. FF die-hards can expect more turn-based combat set in a wildly improbable world of science fantasy.



FLOCK! (PSN)

PUBLISHER: Capcom
DEVELOPER: Proper Games
OUT: 2009

Echoes of the underrated PS2 action puzzler *Herd*, Gerdy resonate though this downloadable game of extra terrestrial ewe-wrangling. Your mission: herd a herd of impressionable sheep through obstacle courses back to your mothership, the Mother Flocker. Co-op play will also be supported. We smell a cult hit.



FLOWER (PSN)

PUBLISHER: Sony
DEVELOPER: ThatGameCompany
OUT: TBC 2009

There is obviously a clear, if unspoken standing order at Sony HQ dictating that a certain number of games must be released each year catering to gamers that are... pharmaceutically enhanced. This is one of them. You must steer a floating flower petal through a field of dreams, triggering explosions of colour. Trippy as hell.

FINAL FANTASY VERSUS XIII

PUBLISHER: Ubisoft
DEVELOPER: Square Enix
OUT: TBA 2009

This action/comabt/tactical/role-playing game will be set in the same universe as *Final Fantasy XIII*, but will be completely unrelated to its story. The combat system will be closer to *Kingdom Hearts* than your traditional *Final Fantasy* fare. It'll also use SIXAXIS. Yay.

FORMULA ONE 2009

PUBLISHER: Atari
DEVELOPER: Codemasters
OUT: Mid 2009

Did you enjoy *Colin McRae DiRT*? Did you like *Race Driver GRID*? Are you pre-emptively enjoying the V8 Supercars game that will probably never get made? Then you know the power and finesse of the Ego Engine, the technology the Codies is using to bring this year's F1 season to gamers. Expect excellence.



FUEL

PUBLISHER: Atari
DEVELOPER: Asobo Studio
OUT: TBA 2009

Don't let the the four-letter name fool you. This isn't yet another Codies game made with the Ego Engine. Formerly known as *Grand Raid Offroad*, this zero-loading open-world racer will let you tool across 14,000 square km of terrain ravaged by tornadoes and sandstorms. Think Paris/Dakar. Think quad bike heaven.



GHOSTBUSTERS: THE VIDEO GAME

PUBLISHER: Atari
DEVELOPER: Terminal Reality
OUT: Mid 2009

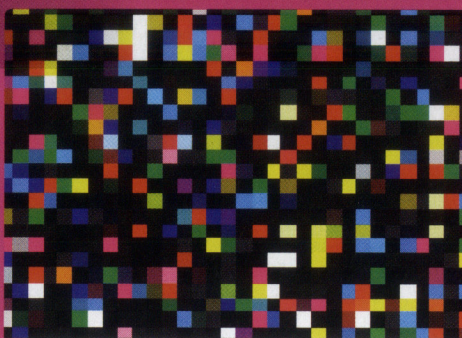
Put that crude C64 version out of your mind; this is an official threequel, with a script from Harold Ramis and Dan Aykroyd. They join Bill Murray and Ernie Hudson to voice the fab four as they battle Slimer, the Stay Puft Marshmallow Man, and Gozer the Gozerian. Wicked!



THE GODFATHER II

PUBLISHER: EA
DEVELOPER: EA Redwood Shores
OUT: Early 2009

The last *Godfather* game was good at making you feel like a hoodlum — this one will make you feel like a don. Tactical stand-over action will be complemented by a stragic view in which you'll control your crime empire across New York, Miami, and Havana. Another plus: online 16-player action.



GOD OF WAR III

PUBLISHER: Sony
DEVELOPER: SCE Santa Monica
OUT: October 2009

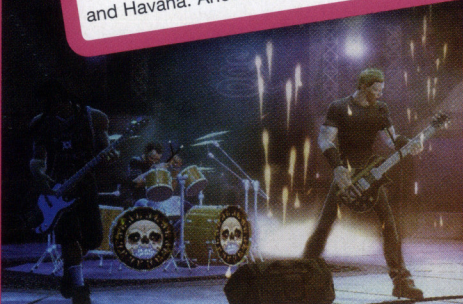
Kratos returns, continuing on his path of righteous vengeance against gods, titans, zombies, giants, centaurs, and bats. Some of the facts Sony has shared: it will display in full 1080p, it will support both SIXAXIS and DualShock 3, and will show, "why there are no more Greek myths." Our guess: because you kill them all.



GRAN TURISMO 5

PUBLISHER: Sony
DEVELOPER: Polyphony Digital
OUT: December 2009

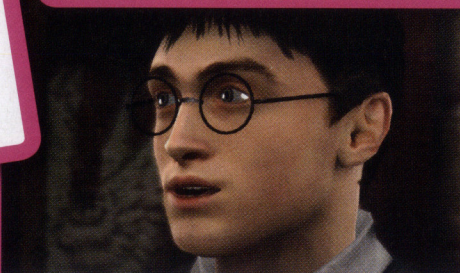
Behold: the racing series that real-life race drivers prefer. Sources within Sony have made conflicting statements on when *Gran Turismo 5* will hit the shops. It could be Christmas. It could be 2010. One thing is certain: it will be an all-singing, all-dancing, high-def delight for motoring enthusiasts everywhere.



GUITAR HERO: METALLICA

PUBLISHER: Activision
DEVELOPER: Neversoft
OUT: Mid 2009

Money good! Napster bad! We kid, we kid. After seeing *Some Kind of Monster*, it's impossible to hate these seriously flawed gods of rock. The 45 tracks in this stand-alone game will include 28 by the band itself (including 'The Unforgiven', 'Master of Puppets', and 'Enter Sandman'), plus 17 of their favourite rock songs.



HARRY POTTER AND THE HALF-BLOOD PRINCE

PUBLISHER: EA
DEVELOPER: EA Bright Light Studio
OUT: Mid 2009

Almost every video game ever based off a movie has been a God-awful quest to smash crates full of pus. The Harry Potter series is the exception that proves the rule, providing a quite decent window into Master Potter's wizard lifestyle. Wanna ride his broomstick?



HEAT

PUBLISHER: TBA
DEVELOPER: Gearbox Software
OUT: TBA 2009

Director Michael Mann is super-keen for Gearbox to turn his blistering movie into a game. But the severely limited manpower at Gearbox has kept the project mired in development hell. President Randy Pitchford promises a heist game of 'sociopaths and killers'. Basically, *Kane & Lynch* done properly.

“The severely limited manpower at Gearbox has kept the project in development hell”

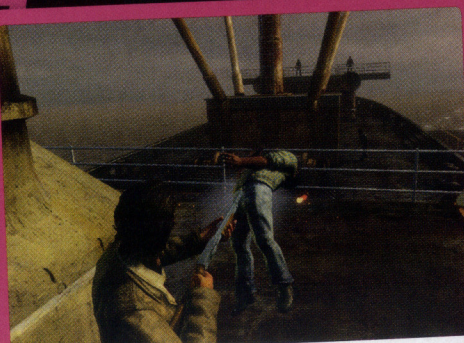
Heat



HEAVY RAIN

PUBLISHER: Sony
DEVELOPER: Quantic Dream
OUT: 2009

We like to refer to this PS3 exclusive as *Chubby Rain*, a reference to the zero-budget sci-fi shocker depicted in Steve Martin's *Bowfinger*. It's a sly means of skewering the pretentiousness that the makers of *Fahrenheit* like to pour over all their adventure games in a thick, wanky syrup. It looks gorgeous, though. It may even be good.



HEIST

PUBLISHER: Atari
DEVELOPER: inXile Entertainment
OUT: TBC 2009

It's from the developer that brought us the so-so remake of *The Bard's Tale*, so it may not be quite as good as Gearbox's *Heat* (see above). On the other hand, *HEIST* will probably, eventually reach the shops. Your squad of four crooks has a dream: to rob bigger and bigger banks, and eventually crack the San Fransico mint.



HEROES OVER EUROPE

PUBLISHER: Atari
DEVELOPER: Transmission Games
OUT: TBC 2009

Coded in Melbourne by the outfit formerly known as IR Gurus, this sequel to 2005's *Heroes of the Pacific* takes the air combat action straight into the lair of the Nazis. While Transmission's last air combat game, *Heatseeker*, failed to blow us away, the chance to plant a bunker-buster in Hitler's shithouse is too good to miss.

99 GAMES YOU MUST PLAY IN 2009



I AM ALIVE

PUBLISHER: Ubisoft
DEVELOPER: Darkworks
OUT: TBC 2009

As of this writing, Ubisoft has indicated that the natural disaster survival game *I Am Alive* will be a March release. This is troubling, but probably not true. *I Am Alive* is an interesting little number, because there are few games of its ilk and most first-person shooters simply contain space marines.

“Some would say it’s the single best first-person shooter available for the PS3”

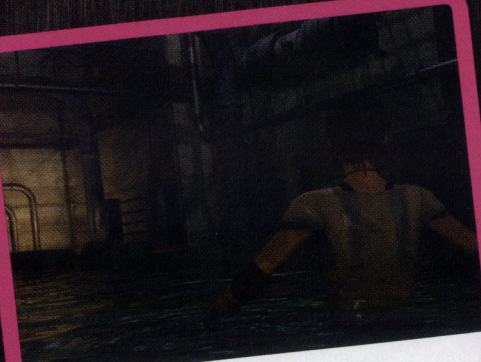
Killzone 2



IL-2 STURMOVIK: BIRDS OF PREY

PUBLISHER: TBC
DEVELOPER: Gaijin Entertainment
OUT: TBC 2009

The fiercest fighting of WWII was on the Eastern Front, where millions of Nazis and commies butchered each other on the ground — and in the skies. An adaptation of the PC combat flight sim classic, *BoP* will feature 50 historical missions and massive multi-player battles.



HYDROPHOBIA

PUBLISHER: TBC
DEVELOPER: Blade Interactive
OUT: Mid 2009

The developers of *Hydrophobia* are extremely proud of their fluid mechanics system, the HydroEngine. It will be used to simulate the progressive flooding of a cruise liner under terrorist attack. As the moist heroine Kate Wilson, you’ll be able to use the flow of water to your advantage. Terror gets her wet! Ahem.



INDIANA JONES PROJECT

PUBLISHER: Activision
DEVELOPER: LucasArts
OUT: 2009 (maybe)

This rip-roaring action/adventure game is being made with NaturalMotion’s euphoria, the technology behind the advanced AI and character movement in *Star Wars: The Force Unleashed*. It sounds awesome, but since the big reveal at E3 ’06 little has been seen of the new *Indy*. Will it launch in ’09? We can only wait and hope.



INFAMOUS

PUBLISHER: Sony
DEVELOPER: Sucker Punch Productions
OUT: Mid 2009

One could be forgiven for considering the free-roaming-urban-super-anti-hero genre saturated, but we’ve got a lot of time for Sucker Punch. The lads who brought us the Sly Cooper trilogy have created a far more mature title with *InFamous*, in which you can use your electricity powers for good... or for evil!

JAMES BOND DRIVING PROJECT (UNTITLED)

PUBLISHER: Activision
DEVELOPER: Bizarre Creations
OUT: Late 2009

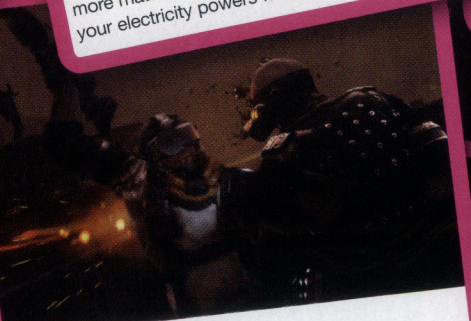
This upcoming untitled game from the makers of *Project Gotham* is not based on any James Bond movie in particular. Rather, it is a celebration of all the wonderful supercars the pommy spy has crashed over the years. *PGR* plus *The Club*? Yes, please!



JUST CAUSE 2

PUBLISHER: Eidos Interactive
DEVELOPER: Avalanche Studios
OUT: Q1 2009

Rico Rodriguez returns for another subversive sandbox adventure. Version 2.0 of the Avalanche Engine will let you target specific terrorist body parts — blast their kneecaps, and watch them drop. Enemy AI is a lot smarter, and there are stacks of new guns and vehicles. Hopefully it’ll be longer than six hours, too.



KILLZONE 2

PUBLISHER: Sony
DEVELOPER: Guerrilla Games
OUT: Early 2009

It’s awesome. It’s absolutely brilliant. Some would say it’s the single best first-person shooter available for the PS3. There is no denying the splendour of its graphics, the robustness of its multiplayer, or the delight it deals out as you mow down space Nazis by the score. We can barely believe it, but *Killzone 2* lives up to the hype.



L.A. NOIRE

PUBLISHER: Rockstar Games
DEVELOPER: Team Bondi
OUT: Late 2009

The name is a little misleading. The developer of this retro, *Chinatown*-style urban crime-solving game is actually based way over in Ultimo, on Sydney’s post-industrial urban fringe. We will forgive this deception if this really does deliver a ‘perfect’ recreation of late-1940s Los Angeles, hats and all.

MAFIA II

PUBLISHER: 2K
DEVELOPER: 2K Czech / Illusion Softworks
OUT: Late 2009

How does 2K hope to compete with the flood of urban action crime simulators? By offering something a little different. Put simply, the graphics in *Mafia II* are utterly stunning. The photo-realistic facial animations in particular could even wipe the floor with *Chubby Rain* (see above). One to watch.



MAG

PUBLISHER: Sony
DEVELOPER: Zipper Interactive
OUT: Late 2009

It's short for *Massive Action Game* — an online-enabled first-person shooter with support for up to 256 players. Sure, it's a tall order, but if anyone can do it it's Zipper, the studio that brought us the wonderful world of *SOCOM*. There will be tanks, planes, paratroopers, leveling, and a massively massive ongoing campaign.

MARVEL ULTIMATE ALLIANCE 2: FUSION

PUBLISHER: Activision
DEVELOPER: Vicarious Visions
OUT: TBC 2009

This top-down co-op beat-'em-up sequel will let the heroes in your squad combine their powers to perform special attacks — Wolverine's 'Fastball Special' will be one of them. Other upgrades will include Havok physics. A must-play for Marvel tragics.

NOBY NOBY BOY

PUBLISHER: Namco Bandai
DEVELOPER: Namco Bandai
OUT: Early 2009

This one is exactly what it looks like: a colossal fruity mess. Yet we'd expect nothing less from Keita Takahashi, the creator of *Katamari Damacy*. As an infinitely flexible creature, your mission is to stretch into as long a shape as possible, ultimately reaching to the moon, and to other planets, too. Freaky.

“This one is exactly what it looks like: a colossal fruity mess”

Noby Noby Boy

OPERATION FLASHPOINT 2: DRAGON RISING

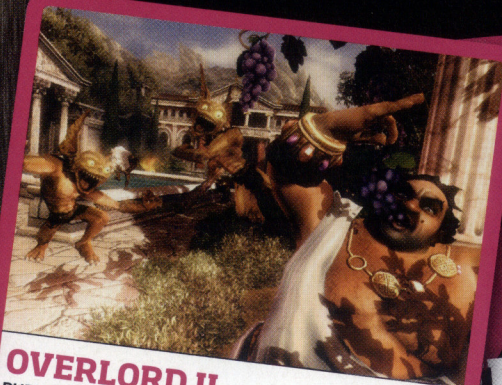
PUBLISHER: Atari
DEVELOPER: Codemasters
OUT: Early 2009

While the developer has changed, the vision remains: a realistic simulation of modern warfare on a truly massive scale. There will be over 50 vehicles, and over 70 weapons (plus mods and upgrades) for the 8-on-8 battles. The style? Like a gritty, modern, documentary.

OUTRUN ONLINE ARCADE (PSN)

PUBLISHER: SEGA
DEVELOPER: Sumo Digital
OUT: Early 2009

Since the last game in the series was *Outrun 2006: Coast 2 Coast*, this DLC game is a Godsend for powersliding fans. Sure, the first *Outrun* made especially for the PS3 is just a port, but it's still from Sumo Digital, and will support up to six-player races.



OVERLORD II

PUBLISHER: Atari
DEVELOPER: Triumph Studios
OUT: TBC 2009

The first *Overlord* has a well-deserved cult following, but also attracted a good deal of criticism. Triumph has listened to the fans, and will be working numerous improvements into *Overlord II*. For starters, they've finally put in a mini-map. Your goblin minions will be smarter than ever, and will even ride mounts into battle.



PROTOTYPE

PUBLISHER: Activision
DEVELOPER: Radical Entertainment
OUT: Mid 2009

From the angry, angry lads who brought us *The Incredible Hulk*, *Prototype* takes the free-roaming super-sociopath genre to New York City. Mutant Freak Alex Mercer can absorb the bodies of those he kills, stealing their skills and memories, and thus slowly patching together the plot. This one is looking brutal.



RAGE

PUBLISHER: EA
DEVELOPER: id
OUT: TBC 2009

Another showcase for the id Tech 5 graphics engine (see *Doom 4*), *Rage* will feature driving and shooting in a grim/dark post-apocalyptic world. The comet that devastated the Earth also appears to have led to the rise of a new race of evil mutants. Either that, or standards of dentistry have plummeted. Looks good.

99 GAMES YOU MUST PLAY IN 2009

RED FACTION: GUERRILLA

PUBLISHER: THQ
DEVELOPER: Volition Inc.

OUT: Mid 2009
This futuristic sandbox game of armed rebellion has yet to fail to knock our socks off. You can demolish massive buildings. You can throw miniature black holes like grenades. You can do all this, and more. Get your arse to Mars, baby — we can't wait another day!

RESIDENT EVIL 5

PUBLISHER: TBC
DEVELOPER: Capcom
OUT: Early 2009

Developed by veterans of *RE4* (plus some refugees from Clover), *RE5* will support co-op play in its near photo-realistic journey into the heart of darkness: sub-Saharan Africa. Sure, there was that nasty business with the accusations of racism, but our first-hand impressions tell us this could be the game of the year.

“EA is giving Australia time to catch up after the one-year-delay fiasco.”

Rock Band 2

RIDE TO HELL

PUBLISHER: TBC
DEVELOPER: Deep Silver / Perspective Studios
OUT: Q2 2009

The good news is that this action/adventure game will be uncompromising in its emulation of 1960s American biker culture. Think of it as an American McGee's *Full Throttle*. The bad news is that it's from a studio that has only ever done ports of other games, with the exception of the aborted *Manhunt 2*. A little iffy.

ROCK BAND 2

PUBLISHER: MTV Games/EA
DEVELOPER: Harmonix
OUT: Early '09

Thank Heaven for small mercies. In choosing not to release *Rock Band 3* this year, EA is giving Australia time to catch up after the one-year-delay fiasco of *Rock Band*. The deuce will come with more realistic-looking instruments, a more flexible Tour Mode, a training mode, and more advanced customisation.

ROCK REVOLUTION

PUBLISHER: TBC
DEVELOPER: Savage Entertainment
OUT: Early 2009

The ultimate evolution of *GuitarFreaks* and *DrumMania*, *Rock Revolution* is Konami's attempt to regain supremacy in the ludicrously profitable genre of music gaming. Like *Guitar Hero World Tour* it will feature a composition mode. You'll also be able to just jam away, experimenting with what your 'instruments' can do.

SABOTEUR

PUBLISHER: TBC
DEVELOPER: Pandemic
OUT: TBC 2009

Set in occupied Paris during WWII, you control a lone member of the resistance, assassinating key Nazi officials in a dreary cityscape. Slaying fascists increases a given area's Will to Fight (or WtF), slowly restoring colour as you rouse hope in the populace. It's an open world game, too, with optional quests aplenty.

SACRED 2: FALLEN ANGEL

PUBLISHER: TBC
DEVELOPER: Ascaron
OUT: Early 2009

Closer to *Diablo* than *Oblivion*, *Sacred 2* is a top-down game of slaying monsters, hurling spells, and collecting loot. You can expect to do a whole lotta grinding as you romp through a unique, steam-punk themed fantasy world, bonking goblins for good or evil. The PC version was buggy; hopefully they've sorted that out.

SEGA MEGA DRIVE ULTIMATE COLLECTION

PUBLISHER: SEGA
DEVELOPER: Backbone Entertainment
OUT: Early 2009

Over 40 of the finest games to grace SEGA's breakthrough '90s console have been re-mastered in 720p, with Trophies to encourage compulsive completion of their mindless repetitive tasks. Hits include *Sonic*, *Space Harrier*, *Ecco*, *Alex Kidd*, and stacks more.

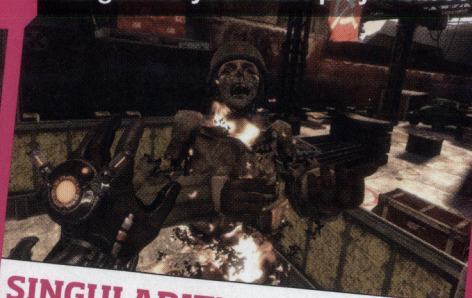
SILENT HILL: HOMECOMING

PUBLISHER: Atari
DEVELOPER: Double Helix Games
OUT: Early 2009

Note that the latest outing for this esteemed survival horror series was not made by the original team at Konami in Japan, but rather by the gaijin devils at Double Helix in California. While reviews have been favourable, all admit that *Homecoming* lacks pizzazz.

INDEPTH

99 games you must play in 2009



SINGULARITY

PUBLISHER: Activision
DEVELOPER: Raven Software
OUT: 2009

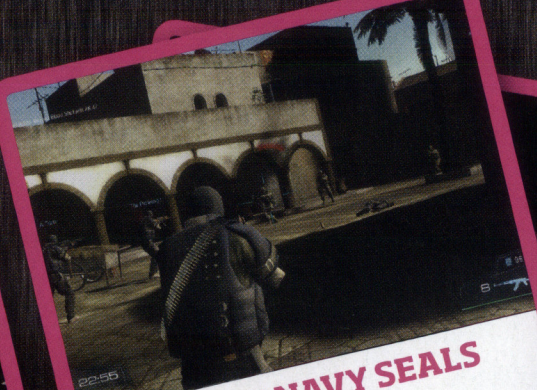
Remember *Timeshift*? Remember how it was supposed to be a FPS with cool time-distorting effects, but it didn't really deliver? *Singularity* holds the same promise, but it looks like it's got the goods. Observe the player aging an enemy to death in the above screen. We'll have an in-depth report next ish.



SKATE 2

PUBLISHER: EA
DEVELOPER: EA Black Box
OUT: Early 2009

You should see us here in the office, repeatedly leaping off the same dam, trying to get that one trick juuuuust right. Talk about addictive. A solid improvement over *Skate*, *Skate 2* has double the number of tricks, lets you step off the board and run around, and even lets you play as a girl, even though girls can't skate. Buy it.



SOCOM: US NAVY SEALS CONFRONTATION

PUBLISHER: Sony
DEVELOPER: Slant Six Games
OUT: Early 2009

Like *Warhawk*, it's an online-only multi-player shooter, only it's set in the brutal trouble-spots of the real world. You'll be able to play as SEALs, British SAS, or as special forces from Germany, France, or Spain. The response overseas was tepid, but it's improved.

“You should see us here in the office, repeatedly leaping off the same dam”

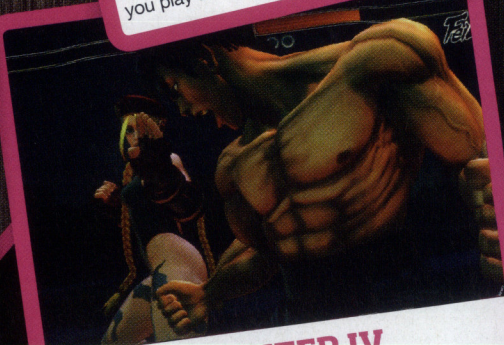
Skate 2



STORMRISE

PUBLISHER: SEGA
DEVELOPER: The Creative Assembly
OUT: TBC 2009

We have high hopes for *Stormrise*. In a novel twist, this real-time strategy game has no God-like overhead view. No, you can only see what your troops can see, which will force you to use proper battle tactics. Maps will be fully three-dimensional, with burrowing as well as flying units. And it's made in Australia, too!



STREET FIGHTER IV

PUBLISHER: TBC
DEVELOPER: Capcom
OUT: Early 2009

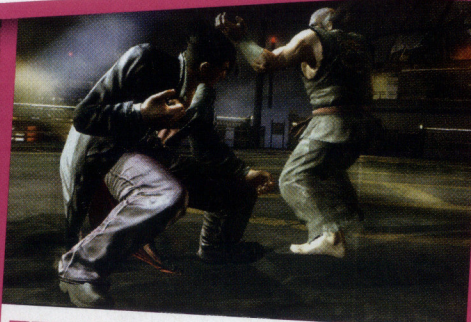
Panic not, dear readers. The untimely demise of Red Ant will not affect the supply of the ultimate *Street Fighter* game in Australia. Its dazzling 3D graphics are the perfect match for the old-school 2D mechanics, but be fore-warned: we've been playing it almost non-stop in the office, and have yet to beat end boss Seth.



SUPERCAR CHALLENGE

PUBLISHER: TBC
DEVELOPER: System 3 / Eutechnix
OUT: Autumn 2009

Following the success of the quite-decent *Ferrari Challenge*, this racer from System 3 will let you drive some of the most lust-inducing motor cars on the planet. Its 40 different vehicles will include the Ferrari FXX & 430, the McLaren F1, the Aston Martin DB9, and the Lamborghini Murcielago. A better career mode, too.



TEKKEN 6

PUBLISHER: Atari
DEVELOPER: Namco Bandai
OUT: TBA

Retaining all the features from *Tekken 5* and *T5: Dark Resurrection*, this 3D fighter will sport larger and more interactive arenas, a Rage system to boost attacks of characters low on health, and the largest roster in the series to date: 42 characters in all. New fighting styles will include Bajiquan and freestyle karate. It's epic stuff.



TERMINATOR SALVATION

PUBLISHER: Warner Bros. Interactive
DEVELOPER: GRIN
OUT: May 2009

Based on the upcoming movie, the fourth in the series, which will star Christian Bale as John Connor, at war with the cyborg forces of Skynet in the year 2018. Very little has been revealed about this spin-off, but with GRIN's quality assurance outsourced to Indonesia, there could be cause for concern. Expect mediocrity, lads.

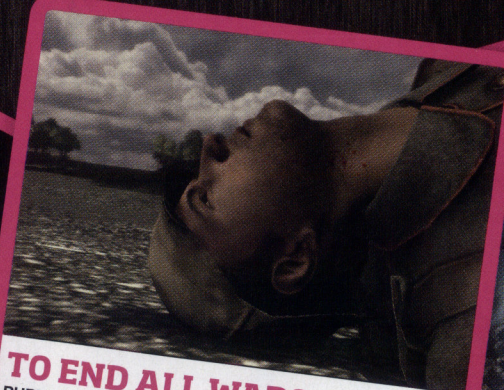


THIS IS VEGAS

PUBLISHER: TBC
DEVELOPER: Surreal Software
OUT: TBC 2009

This game could be doubly damned. Not only has Midway's local distributor, Red Ant, just gone out of business, but we could soon see the demise of Midway itself. Should that transpire, this game of fighting, racing, gambling, and partying in the sin city may never see the light of day. Could be for the best.

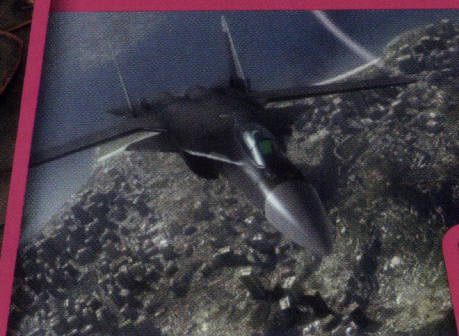
99 GAMES YOU MUST PLAY IN 2009



TO END ALL WARS

PUBLISHER: TBC
DEVELOPER: Kuju
OUT: TBA

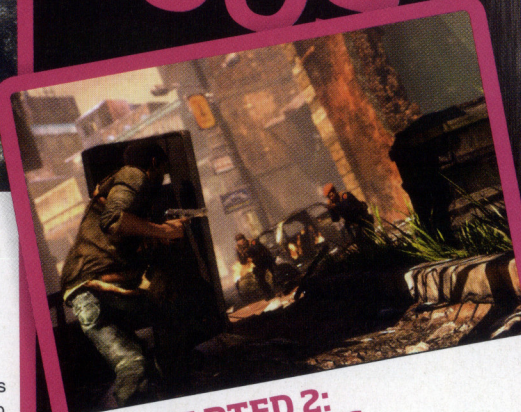
World War I. Trench warfare. Artillery. Thousands of men at a time going over the top, marching to their death as machine guns cut them down. Barbed wire, bayonets, mud, and misery. An entire generation slain before its time. WWI is depressing, but has plenty of potential for a gripping FPS experience.



TOM CLANCY'S H.A.W.X.

PUBLISHER: Ubisoft
DEVELOPER: Ubisoft Romania
OUT: Early 2009

This ultra-glossy near-future flight sim lets you join a mercenary air force, fighting evil around the world. All the locations have been re-created in full 3D from satellite photographs, but the real stars are the jets; it's like *Burnout*, only with planes. We've played the co-op mode to death, and it rocks. A fine product all round.



UNCHARTED 2: AMONG THIEVES

PUBLISHER: Sony
DEVELOPER: Naughty Dog
OUT: Late 2009

The original re-invented action/adventure for the high-def era, and the sequel is going one better. There will now be stealth levels, with improved AI for the enemies hunting you down, improved cover and climbing mechanics, and much, much better graphics. Sweet.

UNTITLED ROCKSTAR WESTERN

PUBLISHER: Rockstar
DEVELOPER: Rockstar San Diego
OUT: TBC 2009

In the works since 2005 (if not longer), there has been precious little info revealed about this PS3 exclusive. It may or may not be a new *Red Dead Revolver*, but it will feature cowboys, horses, and ghost towns. Knowing Rockstar, we could be in the dark for a while.

“We have doubts about this Vin Diesel vehicle. You should, too.”

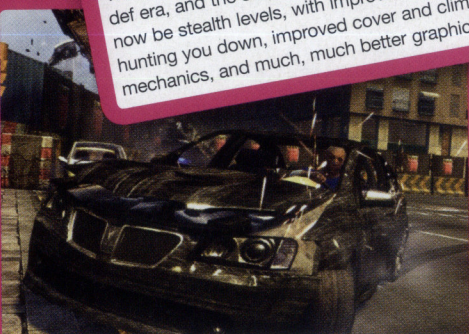
Wheelman



WAY OF THE SAMURAI 3

PUBLISHER: TBC
DEVELOPER: Acquire
OUT: TBC 2009

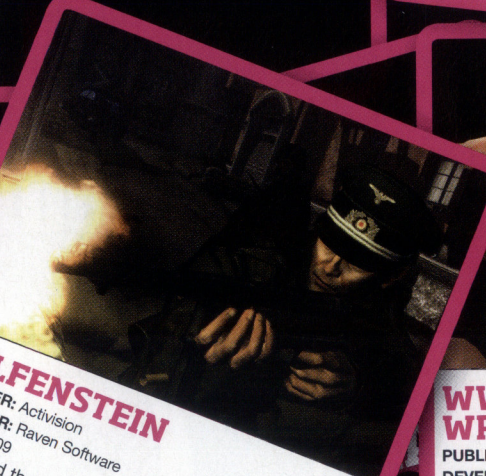
An action/role-playing game set in a turbulent era of Japan's feudal past, *WotS 3* lets you run around doing pretty much what you want. There are 20 multiple endings to work towards, there's in-depth weapon-crafting, and you can even get a henchwoman. Fwoar!! One slight snag: no local release has been confirmed.



WHEELMAN

PUBLISHER: TBC
DEVELOPER: Midway Studios Newcastle
OUT: Early, 2009

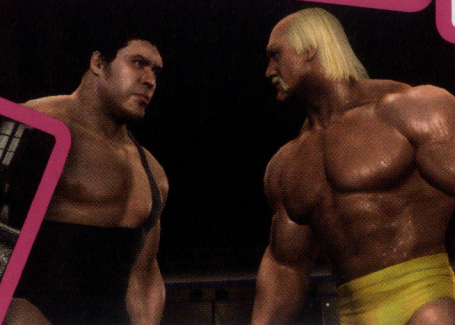
The urban mission-based driving will see you belting through Barcelona city streets, getting into freeway fights with hoodlums trying to run you off the road. The stunts are preposterous; for example, a handbrake turn combined with bullet-time pistol shooting. We have doubts about this Vin Diesel vehicle. You should, too.



WOLFENSTEIN

PUBLISHER: Activision
DEVELOPER: Raven Software
OUT: Mid 2009

It's 1943, and the Nazis are fiddling around with diabolical forces in an attempt to create an unstoppable demonic army. Only one man can stop them: OSS agent BJ Blazkowicz. Complementing the single-player campaign will be class-based online modes featuring both conventional and supernatural weapons. Nice!



WWE LEGENDS OF WRESTLEMANIA

PUBLISHER: THQ
DEVELOPER: Yuke's
OUT: Early 2009

Sure, this epic wrestling simulation will feature brain-boggling graphics and a roster of all-time classic WWE stars. But the real draw will be the challenge of perfectly re-creating epic Wreslemania battles in their entirety. Simple, but could be a hoot.



X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE

PUBLISHER: Activision
DEVELOPER: Raven Software
OUT: Mid 2009

This one is for the fans. Raven has set out to do justice to the brutal Marvel star by making his scrolling beat-em-up as violent and as true to the comics as possible. In short, he's gonna cut people up like a blender. Think *God of War*. With claws. And hair.

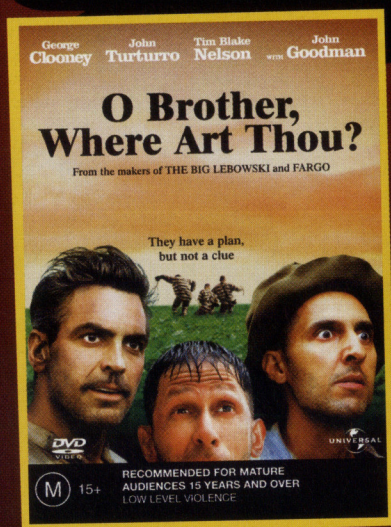


\$29.80^{*RRP}

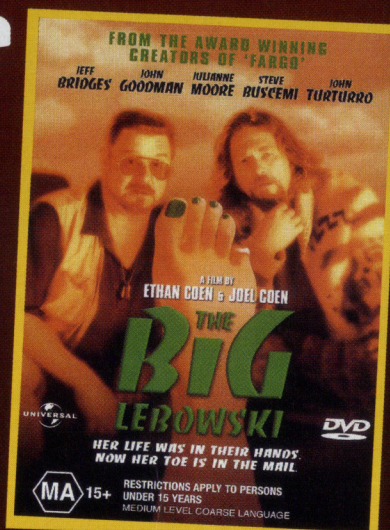


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THIS ISSUE

- 70** Street Fighter IV
- 74** F.E.A.R. 2: Project Origin
- 76** AC/DC Live: Rock Band Track Pack
- 78** Battle Fantasia

REVIEW RATING

PlayStation
GOLD AWARD

10 Incredible. Perfection is relative and elusive, and no game will ever be perfect. Our 10 doesn't mean a game is flawless, it means a game has done everything it set out to do in an amazing fashion and thus it deserves our highest possible praise.

PlayStation
SILVER AWARD

9 Excellent. An outstanding game, either limited by its scope, sequel status (and lack of improvement) or a few minor blemishes from being a 10. Likely one of the very best in its genre, a 9 comes with high praise.

PlayStation
BRONZE AWARD

8 Great: Still well ahead of the pack in most departments, despite a few issues here and there. Thoroughly recommended.

7 Good: A robust package that does a solid job despite a bunch of moderate problems. Enjoyable in parts, just not fantastic overall.

6 Decent: This game will have some noticeable flaws that may make it hard to recommend to those who aren't fans of the genre, but it will do more right than it does wrong. Just.

5 Mediocre: A conceded pass, if you know what we mean. Half okay, but half-busted. Might scrape by for fans, but few will want to play a game that half sucks.

4 Poor: Anything below 5, strictly speaking, is a fail – but there are degrees of 'bad' just as there are degrees of 'good'. A 4 is unrefined, partially broken and poorly designed.

3 Very disappointing: Things start to go very wrong here – fundamentally flawed in many ways, boring and close to pointless.

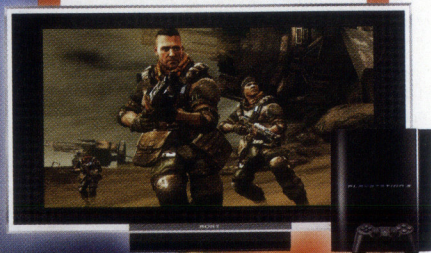
2 Terrible: Virtually nothing good here at all, and definitely not worth the effort of removing the wrapper.

1 The worst: Reserved for the very worst gaming could ever offer. A broken, offensive mess without a single redeeming quality.

“Usually when we review a game we do less describing and more critiquing, but the problem with *Street Fighter IV* is that there's not much to criticise.”

Street Fighter IV

We choose to review our games on a super-slick Full HD 1080p 40" Bravia X-series for the best picture possible. This sucker melts eyeballs!



“...there’s nothing negative to say about how *Street Fighter IV* kicks the llama’s arse”

PlayStation
Official Magazine - Australia

**GOLD
AWARD**



INFO

GENRE: FIGHTING
RELEASE: FEBRUARY 2009
DISTRIBUTOR: TBC
DEVELOPER: CAPCOM
PLAYERS: 1-2
PRICE: \$119.95

STREET FIGHTER IV

Get ready for serious nosebleed

They’ve combed over the retro roster, witnessed the new coat of paint, and been nostalgic at the sound of ‘Sonic Boom’, but at the point where series stalwart Ken unleashes his vertical fire uppercut combo onlookers change, morphing into zombie consumers out to acquire *Street Fighter IV* with the same urgency one might seek a cancer surgeon. It’s a religious wake up. *Street Fighter IV* is that good. A splash in the face after the last 10-years worth of brawlers, its cocktail of violently fruity design, arcade science, and familiar play will provide owners with the best fighting title since the original *Soul Calibur* – and make them more popular.

How? The praise point about *Street Fighter IV* is that it’s for old-school fans

as well as new contenders. Anyone who ever burnt a coin in those old machines will be besotted like an old love. As we’ve covered in previous previews, it features all the characters from *Street Fighter II Champion Edition* with all their old moves, tidied up and wrapped in a next gen bow. What that means is that fans of the original who’ve left their gaming habits back in Never Never Land will be checking into the home of whoever owns a copy for a beer and punch fest. They won’t be disappointed.

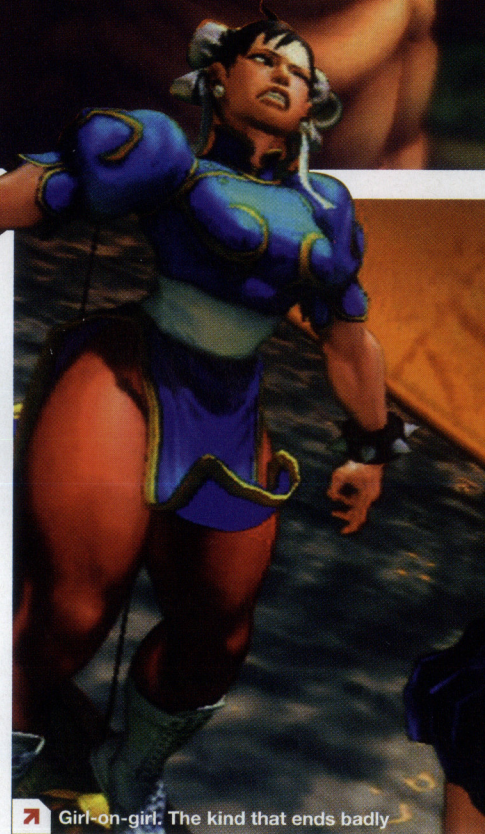
While it would’ve been easy to sniff out the demand for *Street Fighter IV* and respond with a single-titted response, Capcom has righteously revamped every element of the game, including moulding

all the original fighters into a more even, well-rounded roster. Following on from the revamp of *Super Street Fighter II HD Remix* on the PlayStation Network, traditionally weaker characters like Dhalsim, Zangief, and Balrog now exist to beat up opponents like a piñata made of salami. With new moves and abilities, rediscovering these lads – who are pissed about being crud for so long – is a small joy in itself. If you’re an old-school zealot and aren’t interested in the new jive this fact alone is enough to warrant a purchase, though you’d be missing out on a lot by neglecting the new stuff.

In particular the stable of crack-a-lackin’ new fighting flesh is worthy of praise and groping. Previous *Street Fighter*

games haven’t always nailed it when it came to new blood but for the most part the talent here is on the dough. Mexican Luche Libre phenom El Fuerte takes the gold out of the new crew. His jumping-bean speed makes Chun-Li and Vega look like hobbled geriatrics while his crazy aerial moves release mini warheads of awesome. Not far behind him is the largest gut to ever appear in the videogame medium, Yankie Doodle Kung Fu punk, Rufus, and the mixed martial art frog, Abel, who plays like the lovechild of Zangief and a white Lennox Lewis. Finally there’s the fake-boobed C. Viper, who frankly looks ridiculous, but has an unorthodox style sure to confound and wow.

While these four hoons have been

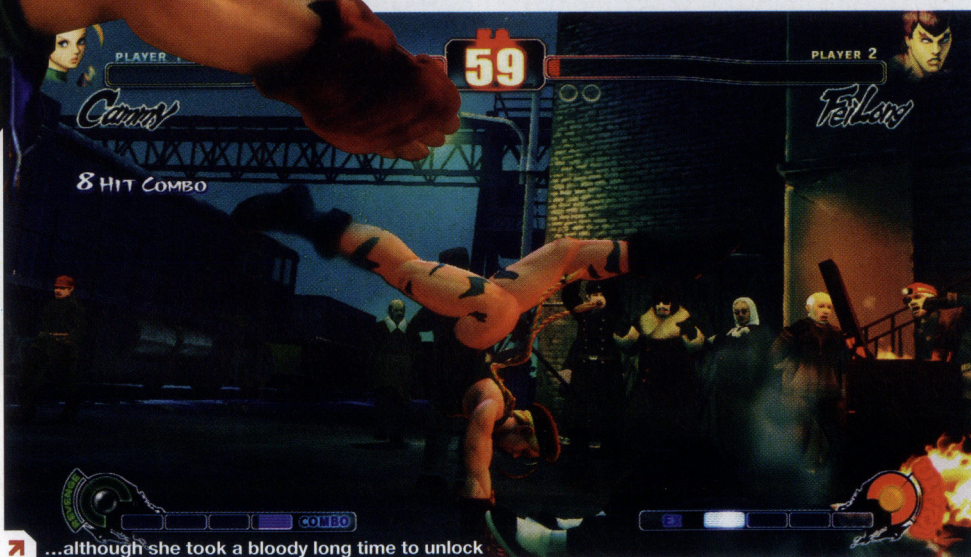
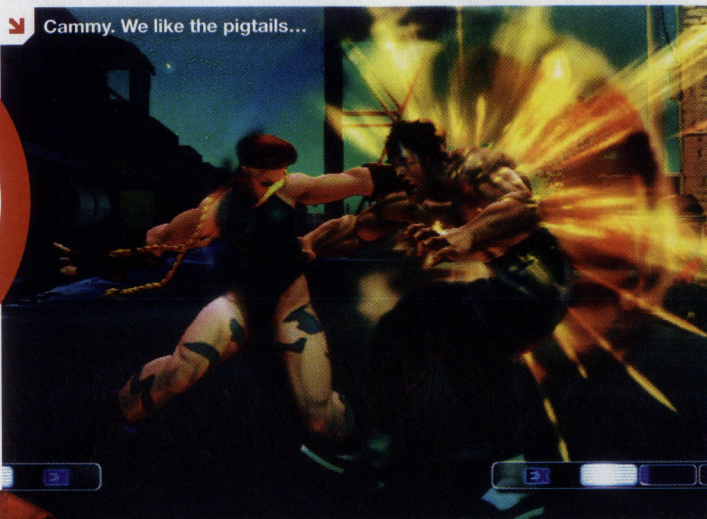


Girl-on-girl. The kind that ends badly



INFO BYTE

Downloadable content is definitely coming for *Street Fighter IV*. No one knows exactly what we'll get besides costumes, but here's hoping the fans can vote on their other favourite characters and we'll land a character pack!



pimped as the new talent since the marketing hype began, they're not the only new sweat on the block. Ken and Ryu's master, Gouken, makes his first playable entrance provided players pull off a flawless run to the top to unlock him. There are also several other characters from previous *Street Fighter* games, including the infinitely spiffy Fei Long, that push the tally of talent up to 25!

Yet it'd all mean bugger all if the gameplay was rubbish. It so happens there's nothing negative to say about how

Street Fighter IV kicks the llama's arse. It's like that prim and prissy kid at high school everyone loathed because apart from having eye-melting looks they aced every test. That's what this game is. Worth noting, though, is how producer Yoshinori Ono has taken the style of fighting in a new direction to the point where even old gurus will have to learn new tricks. As Ono wished, successful attacks don't revolve around jumping into the air like a Bruce Lee screenshot. Now the key to success is to stay on the ground and

anticipate the other person's attacks while slipping in disgracefully massive combinations. The fulcrum of this change is the new Focus Attack system.

As mentioned, old-school fans can love this or leave it, though to reject it is to trash your prospects of being 'trophy worthy'. Each character has one of these focus attacks that's activated by holding down the two medium attack buttons. While held each fighter is invulnerable to most single attacks and can launch counter-strikes. It gets deeper, though.

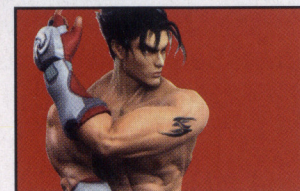
STREET FIGHTER IV GETS IN THE RING

We take a look at how *Street Fighter IV* goes against the competition.



VS VIRTUA FIGHTER V

The match kicks off and *Street Fighter* leaps into the air. *Virtua Fighter* then tries to enter a 20-digit counter combo, but gets it wrong and cops a flying heel to the head. The fight is ooooooover.



VS TEKKEN

Ding, ding! The veteran *Tekken* champ circles *Street Fighter* and goes in for a few girly jabs to the ribs in a bid to open up a juggle combo. *Street Fighter* flexes its abs as *Tekken* keeps up with the girly strikes. *Tekken* eventually tires and falls asleep.



VS MORTAL KOMBAT

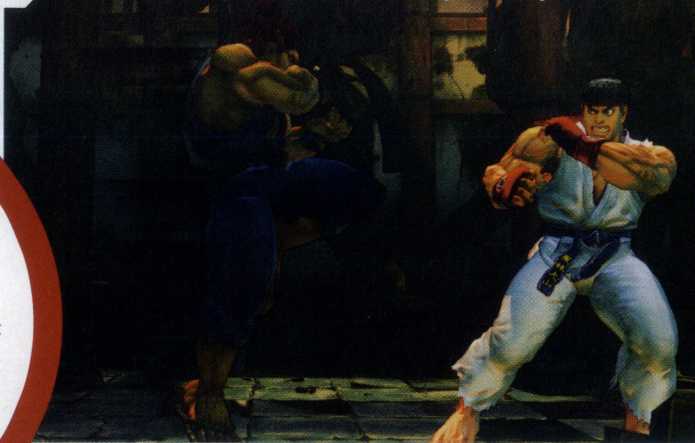
Street Fighter checks the MK instruction manual to see if it has learned any new moves since they last met. It hasn't. *Street Fighter* steps in and clears the ring in 30 seconds with experience.



▶ The dynamic facial expressions are often pretty hilarious. They're a nice touch



▶ "Dude, check out my scab!" "Gar! Get it away from me you freak!"



WHO'S THE BOSS?

Meet Seth. He's the new horrible honcho players will have to smite at the end of the game. It turns out M. Bison has been playing Frankenstein and Seth is his hi-tech monster, programmed to use the best moves from each of the game's fighters. He punches across the screen like Dhalsim, slams like Zangief, uppercuts like Ken, and teleports like Bison himself. Do well in the game and you'll eventually get to unlock the big softie.

round. Such round braking scraps are hard to perform, but it's there for the *Street Fighter* nuts.

Each fighter's Ultra Combo is the bee's knees, the cat's pyjamas, Beyonce's booty. When a fighter's revenge bar fills after copping a beating, they release these massive multi-hit flurries that see the camera dart around with the subtlety of a pinball rocket. While the result looks good enough to frame, the real boon of these attacks is that act as equalisers to ensure rounds stay tight to the final bell.

Mastering such game-busting techniques will prove popular online where those with blistering internet connections and a savage lust to hadouken the hell

out of others will inevitably camp on release. Again, *Street Fighter IV* has gone the extra mile in regards to its online functionality. An option tucked away on its title screen allows players to allow online competitors to interrupt their arcade game against the computer for a three-round contest – brilliant!

That word sums it up. Usually when we review a game we do less describing and more critiquing, but the problem with *Street Fighter IV* is that there's not much to criticise. Capcom has been in the virtual brawling business longer than anyone, and with its vibrant look, pristine and addictive gameplay, innovations, and online mode, *Street Fighter IV* is worth paying double for. Acquire on sight. **Ivan Hauser**

FINAL SAY:

- Perfect blend of old and new
- Juicy roster
- Anime intros and endings are a bit naff
- No Chun-Li shower scene?

VERDICT:
A tight-fisted gut blow of wow! Must own.

10

Provided you've got enough juice in the dinky little blue bar at the base of the screen players can get tricky in a nasty "I just fooled you into selling me your baby" kind of way. Using the focus attacks players can cancel out of super moves and connect them with the game's powerful Ultra Combos to shut the gate on each



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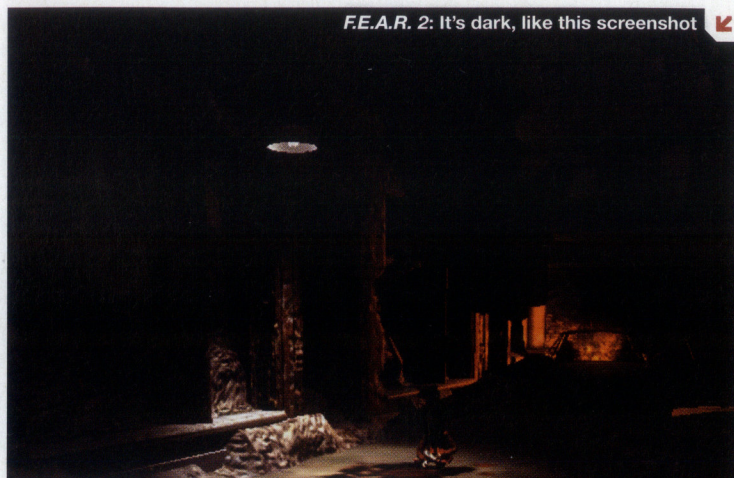
PG Mild violence



This is living

PLAYSTATION 3

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F.E.A.R. 2: It's dark, like this screenshot



INFO

GENRE: SHOOTER
RELEASE: FEBRUARY
DISTRIBUTOR: WB GAMES
DEVELOPER: MONOLITH GAMES
PLAYERS: 1-16
PRICE: \$99.95

This is the view from F.E.A.R. 2's large mech-walker. The chainguns pulp bad guys



WORSE THAN
KILLZONE 2

BETTER THAN
THE PS3 PORT OF
THE ORIGINAL

F.E.A.R. 2: PROJECT ORIGIN

Alma's back. And this time she's naked. Ahem

Oh, *F.E.A.R. 2: Project Origin*, it could have been so beautiful. Where did we go wrong? Admittedly, at first we were a bit underwhelmed by the news that you were being made.

See, the PS3 port of the original *F.E.A.R.* (First Encounter Assault Recon), when compared to the PC and 360 versions, was a bit shit, actually. Murky graphics, stilted animation and a difficulty level more erratic than a cat on acid.

This had set our expectations very low indeed. Then we had the great pleasure to interview Eric Studer, associate producer for the game. He filled our heads with happy thoughts. This would not be another lousy port. In fact it's not a port at all. Every system has the game built from the ground up.

Then phrases like, "adaptive AI", "no game plays the same way twice" and even "sandbox" were thrown into the mix.

We went from fairly disinterested to toe-tapping impatience. Then, finally, we played the game.

WAS IT A FOAMING TANKARD OF OX URINE?

Not at all. In fact, at first, *F.E.A.R. 2* was big fun. We come in about a half hour before the first game ended - playing a new, albeit vague, character who somehow gets the same time-slowy powers you had in the first game.

That's not to say the game doesn't explain itself, it does - almost exhaustively

with Intel you can find lying around the joint. If you enjoy reading page after page of exposition then let out a "Yorp" of joy.

The rest of us, however, hanker for games where characters and action tell the story. Cut scenes, flashbacks and plot twists are all very well, but if you don't have the narrative premise in your head they just seem like window dressing, desperately trying to hide the fact that not much really happens.

Chasing after a naked chick is a great premise for a weekend, but in a game it just seems... like filler. Perhaps the title's biggest problem is the big bad: Alma (the aforementioned naked lady). She's pissed off at being used as a science experiment... but seems to have killed everyone involved in her creation already, so what now? Go after people with glasses? Target morons who use their mobile phones while driving? Haunt a nudist colony?

Employment options for a translucent naked crazy lady with a habit of burning people down to their bones and appearing at scary moments are surprisingly few. You never get a sense of what Alma wants.

RIGHTO, PLOT'S A BIT IFFY - HOW'S SHE PLAY?

The normal fighting, with guns, grenades and various 'special' weapons, is great. It's so fast and bloody - your enemy soldier will jerk a bit and then slump or fall or lean against a wall, dead, leaving beautifully

smeared blood behind him. Initially, at least, the gunplay was so intense we didn't want to use the slow-motion power. But faced with quite a few hostiles we had little choice.

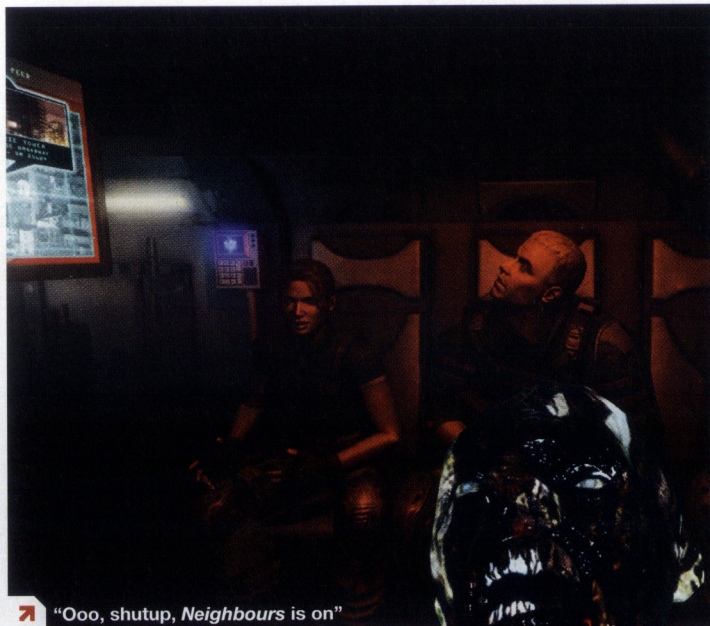
We pressed **A** - the special power button - and suddenly all the antagonists were lit up like neon signs in Vegas! We were told there would be 'rim lighting' so the enemies would be easier to see in the dark. By that we thought there'd just be a slightly brighter line around the character. Instead they're lit up so brightly that when you shoot them it just looks... wrong.

This may prove divisive for *F.E.A.R.* fans. Bullet time, slow-mo - whatever you want to call it - is only fun if you see your foe's gaping, spurting wounds. Now that your enemies have become glowy grunts it takes the shine off. A few frag grenades chucked at a group of enemies in slow-mo is still rather special, but 'rim lighting' kinda sucks.

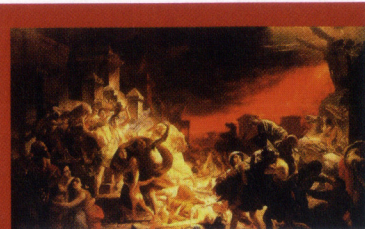
SO WHAT ARE THE LEVELS LIKE?

The level design in *F.E.A.R. 2* is functional. It's easy to get lost (again, *Killzone*





7 "Ooo, shutup, *Neighbours* is on"

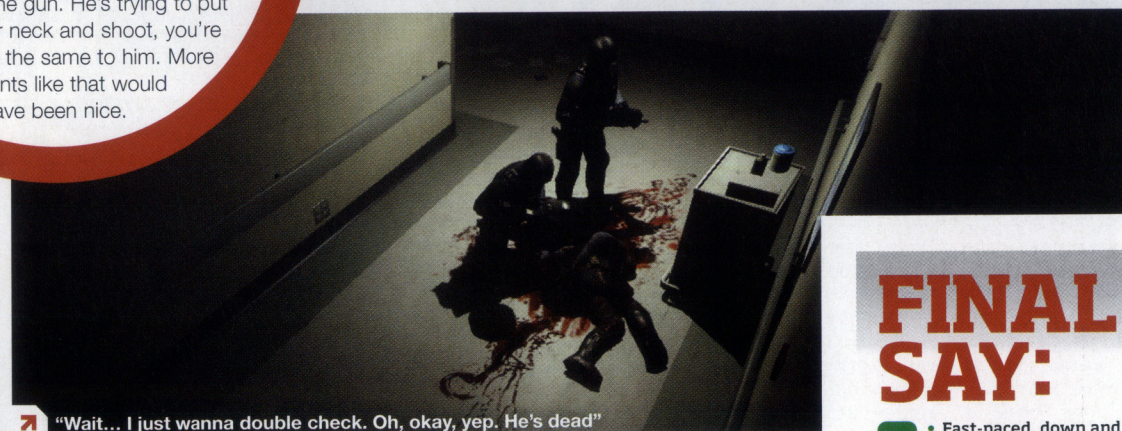
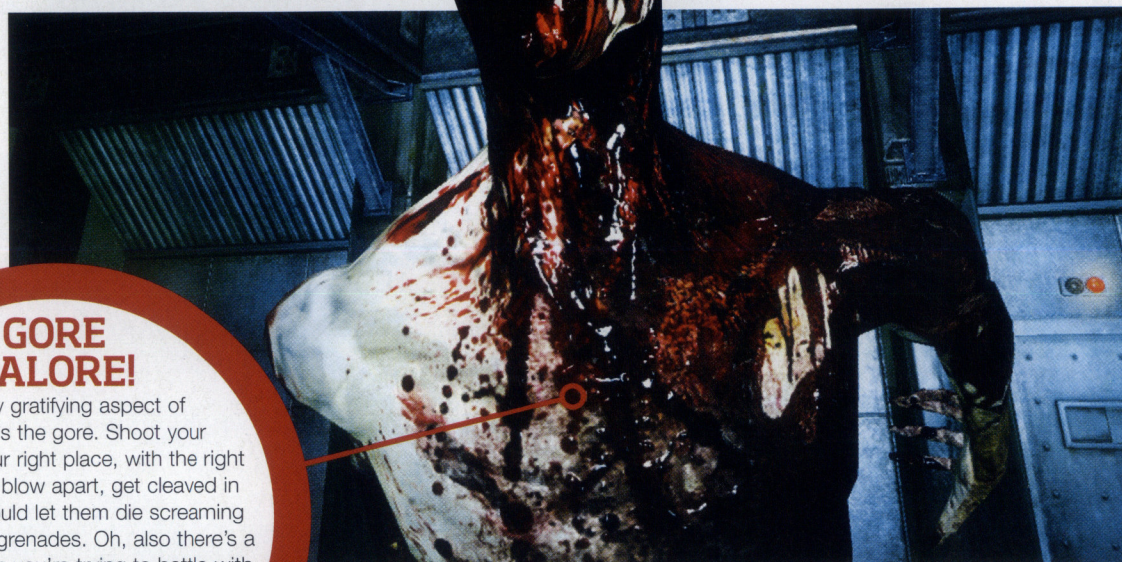


LIKE THE FIRES OF POMPEII!

After Alma pretty much blew up everything you'd expect *F.E.A.R. 2* to be set in ruins. It's not. In fact signs of an explosion are few – but very cool. Ash sculptures of people – frozen in their death throes – like the inhabitants of Pompeii after the rather unwelcome eruption of Mount Vesuvius. You can walk through these poor bastards and they gently break apart. Hey kids, it's snowing dead people!

GORE GALORE!

One very gratifying aspect of *F.E.A.R. 2* is the gore. Shoot your enemies in your right place, with the right gun, and they blow apart, get cleaved in two or your could let them die screaming with incendiary grenades. Oh, also there's a sequence where you're trying to battle with a guy over one gun. He's trying to put it under your neck and shoot, you're trying to do the same to him. More moments like that would have been nice.



7 "Wait... I just wanna double check. Oh, okay, yep. He's dead"

2 shows the way with its directional arrow hint), but everything looks good, if a trifle grainy. The problem is the levels themselves.

We never, or hardly ever, get outside. And when we do, it feels like a movie set. At no time did we believe we were in a real country – even one that just blew up. That's okay – but every bloody level seems to take place in an office or a warehouse or an office inside a warehouse. You become weirdly mesmerised by the repetition and find yourself hopelessly lost. Not fun.

The enemies range from soldiers, to weird replica soldiers, to robots, to larger robots, to far too few experimental creatures. Oh and they bung in a couple of really good weapons on the penultimate level, or 'Interval', as they call it. Erm, thanks?

F.E.A.R. 2: Project Origin is not a bad game, but it could have been so much more. The horror emphasis has been diminished and the plot seems to consist of running from one poorly lit locale to another. Several wow! moments help – but if the core game isn't there it's like pouring perfume on a pig. **Anthony O'Connor**

FINAL SAY:

- Fast-paced, down and dirty gunplay
- Some spooky and/or gory moments

- Seriously, the levels are so repetitive!
- The plot is thin and confused

VERDICT:

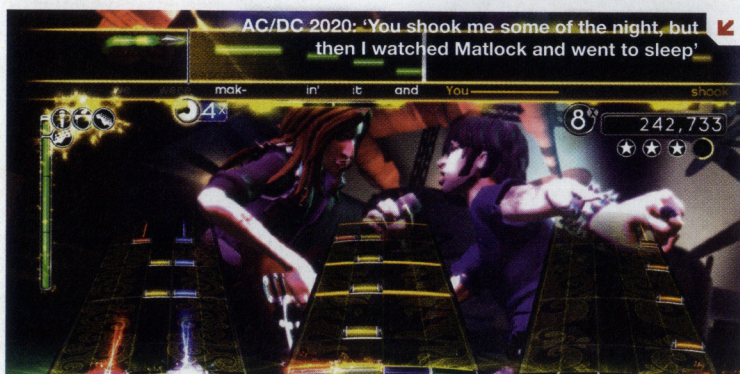
An above average shooter that suffers from a lack of imagination.

7



INFO

GENRE: PARTY
RELEASE: NOW
DISTRIBUTOR: EA
DEVELOPER: HARMONIX
PLAYERS: 1-4
PRICE: \$49.95



AC/DC LIVE: ROCK BAND TRACK PACK

It's a long way to the top

AC/DC. Formed in Sydney in 1973. Over 200 million albums sold worldwide. Australia's most successful rock export, and one of the greatest hard rock outfits of all time.

When *Rock Band 2* was released in the US a few months back it marked the first appearance of an Acca Dacca track in a rhythm game. It was 'Let There Be Rock', and it was quite the coup by Harmonix. *AC/DC Live: Rock Band Track Pack* is likely the deal-sweetener that made this possible.

Is it any good? Yeah, more or less.

We'll punch out the facts quickly for those of you with short attention spans. *AC/DC Live* is a full, standalone game. It's a very limited one, but it's not an expansion pack. You don't need own *Rock Band* to play it (although naturally you'll need some kind of music game peripheral – GH guitars, for instance, work fine). You can,

however, install the tracks onto your hard drive for use in *Rock Band* using a unique code in the box via PSN.

The tracklist is epic. It'd want to be, because it's really the only thing the game has going for it. There are just 18 tracks, which is testing the limits of the \$49.95 price tag, but what a gig. 'Thunderstruck', 'Shoot to Thrill', 'Back in Black', 'Hell Ain't a Bad Place to Be', 'Heatseeker', 'Fire Your Guns', 'Jailbreak', 'The Jack', 'Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap', 'Moneytalks', 'Hells Bells', 'High Voltage', 'Whole Lotta Rosie', 'You Shook Me All Night Long', 'T.N.T.', 'Let There Be Rock', 'Highway To Hell' and 'For Those About to Rock (We Salute You)' – there really isn't a bad one in the bunch. It's a mammoth set full of absolute classics, and they're all live masters. Interestingly, they're all unlocked from the moment you boot up the game – so you don't need to play through it

to unlock all the songs. The difficulty of the tracks likely won't press most rhythm game aficionados, although the vocals can be very tough.

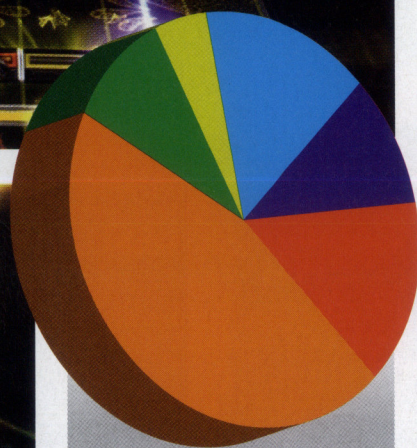
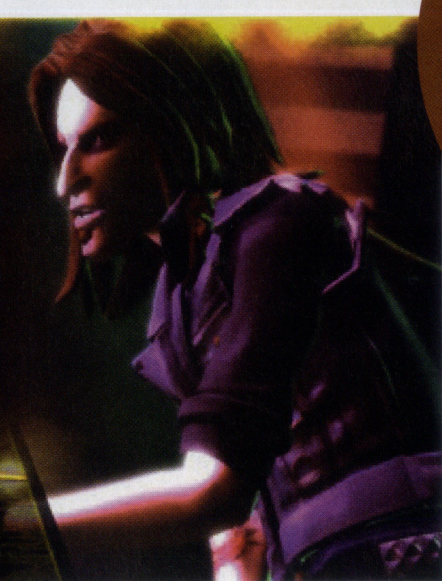
In four-player, however, the game raises itself to a new level. The best crowd-pleaser in *Guitar Hero: World Tour* is 'Livin' On A Prayer' (admit it, it is). Now picture a game with over a dozen such mob ticklers, songs that are so completely impossible to ignore. The kind of tunes you see total strangers singing in unison in bars, sloshing schooners in hand.

Listen to 'You Shook Me All Night Long'. Don't you feel good? Or are you some kind of cyborg programmed to derive no enjoyment from feel-good rock 'n roll?

Guitar Hero: Aerosmith seemed to sell well for a while down here. A little too well, in fact, for a game entirely about Aerosmith. Seeing *AC/DC Live* is true

blue Aussie pub rock, it'll be fair dinkum un-Australian if anybody who owns a guitar controller of any persuasion doesn't buy it.

To be honest, it seems like a missed opportunity that the game itself is little more than a quick re-skin of *Rock Band* with stripped down modes, no online options and no character customisation. There's no AC/DC flavour to the game aside from the tracks, which are played out on stage by random *Rock Band*-style avatars.



OFFICE POLL: THINGS OF EQUAL OR GREATER OCKER- NESS THAN AC/DC

- 15% Utes (Holden)
- 10% Utes (Ford)
- 15% Footy
- 45% Veterans
- 10% Midnight Oil
- 5% Roy & HG

Its saving grace is that, despite these foibles, it's AC/DC. We're not giving the game a free pass on account of the antipodean origins of Acca Dacca, but there's no denying that rhythm games are party games – and there are very few songs here that won't thrust a party into the stratosphere. It would've been much nicer (and cheaper) if we were able to simply download the tracks from the Rock Store, but if compromises like this had to be made in order to get AC/DC to sign on the bottom line, so be it. We not so fickle as to whine about the lack of AC/DC in music games for years, then continue to whine when they're finally delivered. If we're hungry we're not going to complain about the type of plate our food is served on.

If you bought *Guitar Hero: Aerosmith* and don't buy this, we don't want to know you. **Luke Reilly**

FINAL SAY:

- Fantastic tracklist
- Works with GH instruments too
- No AC/DC-themed presentation
- Lacking some modes

VERDICT:

Bare-bones stuff really, but the music makes it worth it.

7

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Battle Fantasia

STAGE: 1 0 WIN(S)

TO START

HP 4581

80

HP 975

3 HOT

149
122

207

He was always weak with numbers



INFO

GENRE: FIGHTING
RELEASE: FEBRUARY
DISTRIBUTOR: TBC
DEVELOPER: ARC SYSTEM WORKS
PLAYERS: 1-2
PRICE: TBC

BATTLE FANTASIA

2.5D and a bit silly

Down, down-forward, forward and punch. Hard punch, usually, for increased velocity and damage. Fight-fans know the mantra of the hadouken well; so well, in fact, that Capcom's simple and intuitive *Street Fighter II* control scheme has become the standard by which we have kicked much digital arse with ever since 1991. You name it, and your favourite fighting game features a Ryu-born fireball movement. *Tekken*? Paul Phoenix's Phoenix Smasher. *Mortal Kombat*? Sub-Zero's slide. *Virtua Fighter*? Akira's koboku.

Far be it, then, for a fledgling little fighter like *Battle Fantasia* to deviate from a formula made genre-standard by the dragon punches and sonic booms of yore, and that it doesn't. What's more, it's all Japanese and weird too, with characters as sublime, cutesy, and downright non-sensical as anything you're likely to see

this side of an acid trip through some wonderful fields and meadows. There's a man with a moon for a face and a girl who's really a cat working as a waitress, and all of this means that poor little *Battle Fantasia* now competes directly on not one but two fronts with both of the current giants of 2D biff – namely, *Guilty Gear* and the forthcoming *Street Fighter IV*. Unfortunately, it can't quite trump the otherworldly strangeness of *Guilty Gear* (whereas *Guilty Gear* is lovable about it, *Battle Fantasia* is just annoying) and its battle system, derivative as it is, is far too rigid to ever truly compete with the glorious fluidity honed over more than a decade by Ken and co.

What then remains? Visually arresting, *Battle Fantasia* is a tour de force of colourful 2.5D (how we hate this new-fangled term, but it is somewhat



Been to Ireland? It's like this. No, not really





DESIGN PEDIGREE

Interestingly, Arc System Works – the same developer behind the demented brilliance of *Guilty Gear* (a game that has the ability to make grown men dress up as young boy raised as a girl) is responsible for this weird curiosity. Perhaps it was testing the faux-3D waters with a sacrificial lamb before committing its primary bread-winner?



A lot of the characters a camper than a row of tents



appropriate) luxury, its wide-eyed pugilists and bustling stages are almost spirited enough to make you forget how much you're struggling with the wooden control scheme. The biggest issue at hand is that, while each fight imaginatively plays out like a chapter in a story book, there is so much excitable nonsense between bouts by the time you get down to business you've been well and truly drained by the ten minutes of vaguely amusing English voice-acting that's just molested you. We're all for an improvement in fighting game narrative (*Virtua Fighter*, we're looking at you...), but you've actually got to put some effort into it to make it work. While graphically splendidous and able to provide momentary thrills, you'll be back to hurling hadoukens into Sagat's one good eye in no time. **Toby McCasker**

FINAL SAY:

- Nice and spirited
- Imaginative
- Shonky voiceovers
- *Street Fighter IV* just came out

VERDICT:

A nice little curiosity, but seriously, *Street Fighter IV* is out.

7

All PS3 PS2 Xbox 360 PSP Wii DS PC

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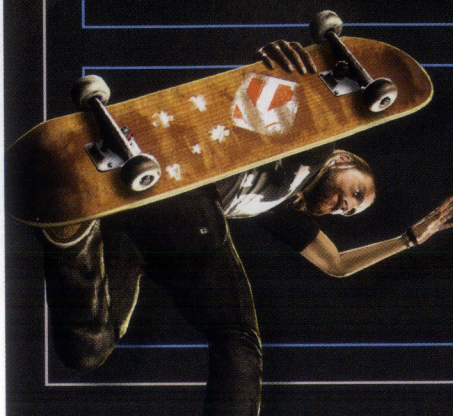
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INTERMISSION

On the box



CINEMAS DIRECTOR: KEVIN SMITH | CAST: ELIZABETH BANKS, SETH ROGEN, JASON MEWES | **IN CINEMAS:** FEB 19

ZACK AND MIRI MAKE A PORNO (R18+)

Zack and Miri caused a bit of a stink in the US late last year leading up to its release on account of its name. Director Kevin Smith (*Dogma*, *Chasing Amy*) had to find tooth-and-nail for the rating, the posters for the film were deemed too lewd and had to be replaced by hand-drawn stick figures, a teaser trailer had to be removed from his website and a bunch of theatres decided not to even screen it. This is largely due to the fact the USA is a weird and dangerous place which, up until recently, was run by a man-child. Torture porn, like *Saw*, is fine. Actual porn, like with nude folks and stuff? Tailspin.

Zack and Miri, in fact, is cut from the same cloth as the recent spate of Judd Apatow-produced flicks - crude comedies with a lot of heart, like *The 40-Year-Old Virgin* or *Superbad*. Zack (Rogen) and Miri (Banks) are two best friends living in a tiny apartment in Pittsburgh. When the bills start stacking up and they're about to be tossed out they both decide that a cheap porno is the perfect way to solve their money woes.

VERDICT:
Surprisingly sentimental. A very raunchy yet equally romantic comedy.

8

ALSO IN CINEMAS...

The International (Rating TBC)

Director: Tom Tykwer
Cast: Clive Owen, Naomi Watts

In *The International*, a gripping thriller, Interpol Agent Louis Salinger (Clive Owen) and Manhattan Assistant District Attorney Eleanor Whitman (Naomi Watts) are determined to bring to justice one of the world's most powerful banks.

Defiance (M)

Director: Edward Zwick
Cast: Daniel Craig, Liev Schreiber, Jamie Bell

The year is 1941 and the Jews of Eastern Europe are being massacred by the thousands. Managing to escape certain death, three brothers take refuge in the dense surrounding woods they have known since childhood. There they begin their desperate battle against the Nazis.

W. (M)

Director: Oliver Stone
Cast: Josh Brolin, James Cromwell, Ellen Burstyn, Elizabeth Banks

In an unprecedented undertaking, acclaimed director Oliver Stone is bringing the life of the 43rd President to the big screen as only he can. *W.* takes viewers through Bush's eventful life, leading up to his decision to invade Iraq.



THE BUZZ

What's really going on behind-the-scenes

Capcom's Toshihiro Tokumaru has made a big reveal about Warner Bros. Pictures' big screen adaptation of Capcom's *Lost Planet*. Speaking of *Lost Planet* he said that the project will cost somewhere between \$150 and \$200 million to

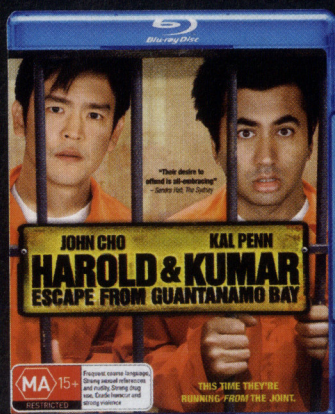
make, and that the producer on the project is Avi Arad, producer of *Spider-Man*.

David Hayter (writer of *X-Men*, voice of *Metal Gear Solid*'s Snake - c'mon, you knew that) is writing the script for *Lost Planet*, which revolves

around an expedition to an ice planet that harbours an energy source with the potential to save mankind. We're not sure why the middle-of-the-road *Lost Planet* got the nod for film treatment, but hey. What do we know?

BLU-RAY DIRECTORS: JON HURWITZ, HAYDEN SCHLOSSBERG | CAST: KAL PENN, JOHN CHO, ROB CORDDRY, NEIL PATRICK HARRIS

HAROLD & KUMAR ESCAPE FROM GUANTANAMO BAY (MA15+)



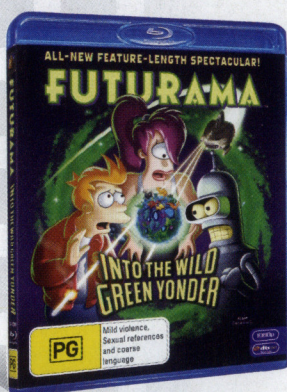
America's favorite pothead since Cheech and Chong return. *Harold & Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay* picks up shortly after the first one left off, cult favorite *Harold & Kumar Go To White Castle*. The duo have planned an impromptu trip to Amsterdam, where Harold will unite with the girl of his dreams and Kumar will be up to his neck in weed. Unfortunately they find themselves up to their necks in trouble when Kumar sneaks a bong onto the flight and is mistaken for a bomb-wielding terrorist. After a run-in with racist Homeland Security agent Ron Fox (Rob Corddry of *The Daily Show*), Harold and Kumar land in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. After escaping from prison and

fleeing back to the US, the two set out across country to get help from Harold's politically connected former classmate, who is also marrying the girl that Kumar let get away. Along this journey they will encounter incestuous rednecks, the KKK, gun-toting prostitutes, and a drugged-out Neil Patrick Harris. Harold and Kumar must use their wits – plus a little luck – to earn their freedom, win back their loves, and save their friendship.

EXTRAS: 6

VERDICT:
Goofy, stoner comedy that's easy to digest. Also, it has nudity. And Doogie Howser

7



FUTURAMA INTO THE WILD GREEN YONDER

(PG)

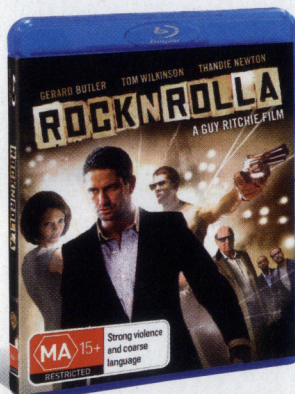
Director: Peter Avanzino
Cast: Billy West, John Di Maggio

In the all-new *Futurama* extravaganza, mankind stands on the brink of a wondrous new Green Age.

EXTRAS: 5

VERDICT:
Perfect for long-term
Futurama fanatics

7



ROCKNROLLA (MA15+)

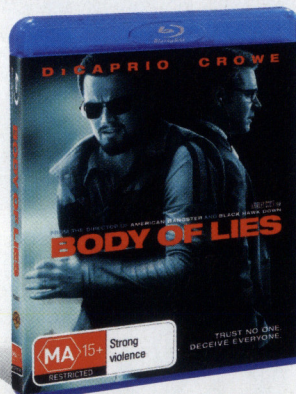
Director: Guy Ritchie
Cast: Gerard Butler, Thandie Newton, Jeremy Piven, Chris Bridges

It's impossible to really tell you about *RocknRolla*, as Guy Ritchie films are usually too complicated. In a nutshell, lots of swearing, blokes named Mumbles, One Two and Johnny Quid, golf club beatings, and a twist or two add up to make *RocknRolla* Ritchie's best flick since *Snatch*.

EXTRAS: 7

VERDICT:
Guy Ritchie is back.
Almost, anyway

7



BODY OF LIES (MA15+)

Director: Ridley Scott
Cast: Leonardo DiCaprio, Russell Crowe, Vince Colosimo

Roger Ferris (DiCaprio) is a man with no identity beyond his last blown cover, trusting his life to a voice on the other end of a phone line. CIA veteran Ed Hoffman (Crowe) wages war from a laptop in his living room in the suburbs, dictating Ferris' movements against an emerging terrorist leader.

EXTRAS: 5

VERDICT:
A entirely serviceable,
rapid-fire thriller

7



**IF YOU
LIKE THIS
TRY...
HAROLD & KUMAR GO
TO WHITE CASTLE**

Although you probably
already have.

On the box

SPEED KILLS

OPS chats to Paul WS Anderson, director of *Death Race*, about his latest actioneer

OPS: So why *Death Race*?

PA: I was obsessed with it as a teenager. This was the video that your parents hated you to watch. It was cool and my parents kept telling me that it was filled with senseless violence and kind of gratuitous nudity, but I didn't think any of it was senseless or gratuitous. I thoroughly enjoyed all of it, as did all of my friends. It was a very anti-authoritarian movie as well which as a teenager, obviously, I really liked. So, for a lot of reasons it was a real fun favourite film for me and a bunch of friends to watch and we saw it a lot. As I grew older and the things that I really took away from it once I got over the nudity and everything, was the image of the cars that were built. These killer cars with machine guns fascinated me and the idea of the death race, that this had somehow become the national sport of America. The baseball and football had all gone away and this was what people were obsessed with. That's what they would watch on their television sets. I've always wondered, even before I became a filmmaker, how did that happen? It's not like the President of America invented it. It must have been some kind of like underground event or kind of illegal thing or a sport. Where did it come from? And the more I thought about it the more I felt that's a very interesting movie to make.

OPS: How much was Roger Corman involved in this one?

PA: Well the whole genesis is that I had lunch with him 14 years ago and asked him for the rights and he agreed, so he's been involved right from the start. We could only have made the movie with his blessing. It's taken a long time. I didn't think when either of us had lunch 14 years ago we thought it was going to take quite this long to get the movie made, he stood by us and there were plenty of times when he could have taken the rights away and given them to someone else. He really believed in me and my vision for this film and he's very happy with the end product.

OPS: Did you like cars as well?

PA: Yes, I mean, I'm a boy. I think most boys love cars. Boys love cars, and that's just a fact.

OPS: Why did you pick Jason Statham?

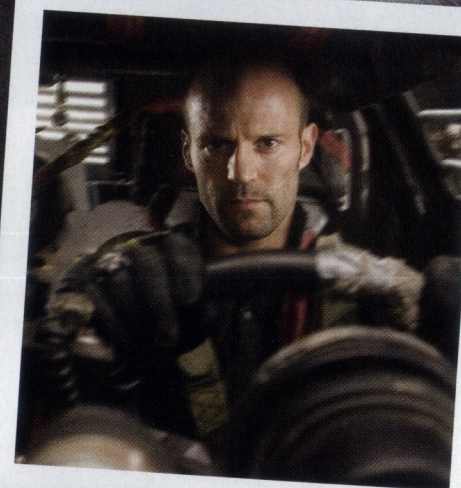
PA: Well, for me, I see this movie as highly influenced by films I loved from the 1970s. And what I loved about actors in the 1970s is you had young Clint Eastwood, you had Charles Bronson, and you had Steve McQueen. You had real blue-collar hard men who were action stars. These were

not Hollywood pretty boys pretending to be tough guys. These were tough guys. If you picked a fight with Charles Bronson, he'd knock you on your ass. Let me tell you, you pick a fight with Jason Statham, he'll throw you through a window. He's the real deal. He's real blue-collar guy and I like that. That's what was appropriate for the movie. For me to buy his character, he had to be like that. There's a line in the script that refers to his character as McQueen cool and Bronson hard and I think Jason's one of the few actors in Hollywood who has that in spades.

OPS: Films of yours like *Event Horizon*, *Soldier* and *Death Race* have a message. Can you comment on that?

PA: When I first came to America, everyone was obsessed with wrestling. That was the big thing. Stone Cold Steve Austin, and Hulk Hogan, and wrestling were huge. It was all fake. So people

were obsessed with fake fighting. You cut to 10 years later and nobody cares about wrestling anymore. Everyone wants Ultimate Fighting. That's the big gross sport. It's real guys in an octagon, really hurting one another. Now, that's just in a decade. I always thought, how long before somebody gets killed in Ultimate Fighting? Because it's going to happen.



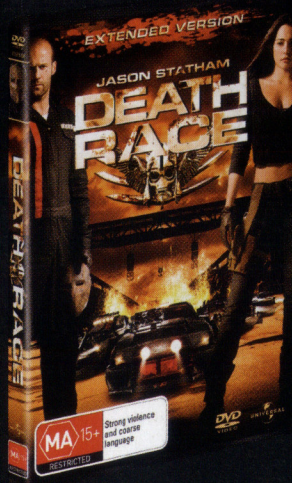
IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...

Death Race 2000

The original is better, as you'd expect.

DVD DIRECTOR: PAUL WS ANDERSON | CAST: JASON STATHAM, JOAN ALLEN, TYRESE GIBSON, IAN MCSHANE

DEATH RACE (MA15+)



The Roger Corman-produced cult fave *Death Race 2000* (1975) gets an update in this spiritual precursor. In 2012, the American economy has collapsed, and prisons have been taken over by corporations. Overseen by Warden Hennessey (Joan Allen), Terminal Island prison generates huge amounts of revenue with pay-per-view broadcasts of 'Death Race', in which inmates participate in an auto race where anything goes. New inmate and ex-race driver Jensen Ames (Statham), framed for the death of his wife, is forced to take over the role of Frankenstein, the contest's recently expired masked star driver. His chief competitor, Machine Gun Joe (Tyrese Gibson), unaware there's a new bloke behind the mask of

his old rival, will stop at nothing to win. With Case, a sexy navigator from the nearby women's facility, and a trusty pit crew led by wise veteran Coach (Ian McShane), Ames has a good shot at winning. If he can survive. Loud and dumb, *Death Race* is still everything a 13-year-old boy could want in a movie. Cars with guns, women in tight pants – tick, tick. It's a shame they're not really old enough to watch it.

EXTRAS: 6

VERDICT: Jason Statham does well, although it's a tad dopey.

6



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PLAYSTATION 3

INTERNET

Gaming, trailers, downloads, friends...

LATEST

Download this...

F.E.A.R. 2: Project Origin demo



Alma is back, bringing all that was awesome about the original F.E.A.R. and kicking it in the pants with a next gen boot.

God of War III trailer



It may not make time pass any faster and only make you want it more, but the *God of War III* trailer will whet even a Spartan appetite.

Skate 2 demo



"If I die before I wake. At least in heaven I can skate." And now you can disprove OPM by skating on the digital plane as well.

LotR: Conquest multiplayer demo



It's all of the good parts of the full version squashed into a demo. Get online and tan yourself some Orc hide. You might as well.

Gran Turismo 5 Prologue

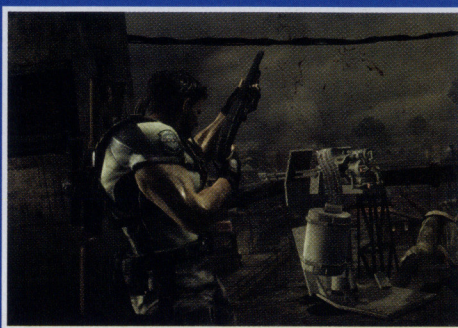


Racing fans rejoice at the price reduction (now \$49.95) of *GT5: Prologue* while burning rubber all over the racing world.

NEWS

TASTE THE EVIL

Resident Evil 5 demo nears

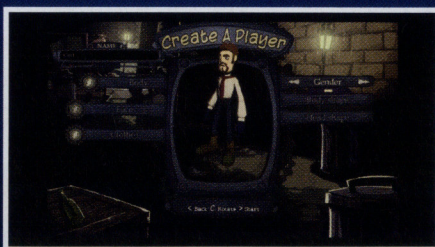


Now while those lucky Xbox 360 guys may have got their hands on an 'exclusive' *Resident Evil 5* demo recently, the good news is that the so-called exclusivity has a very short shelf life. That's right folks, the demo for the next, much-hyped entry in the horror series was released on February 2 and awaits your download. Despite featuring cutscenes, offline and online co-op play and two playable levels, it still manages to weigh in at a mere 500MB. Even better, it also includes the option to not use the love-'em-or-hate-'em series staple controls, which makes traversing the world a whole lot less frustrating.

A PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

Penny Arcade invades PSN

Fans of the *Penny Arcade* web comic will be pleased to hear that Gabe and Tycho have made their way onto the PSN in the first instalment of their RPG-adventure series. Laugh your way through the alternate 1920s universe of New Arcadia while battling baddies, mastering mysteries as well as running into weird and wonderful characters all the while being entertained by the *Penny Arcade* sense of humour. You can pick up *Precipice of Darkness: Episode One* for \$15.95 now.



ALL PLAY AND NO WORK

Get the unlocks with no effort

So you've recently bagged yourself a copy of *Skate 2* and are thoroughly enjoying skating your digital arse all over the gaming world. The only problem is that while you're loving every moment of the game, you're not the type of gamer who wants to go to all the bloody time and effort of unlocking each and every location, skater and gear that the game has to offer. But just because you can't be arsed, doesn't mean you don't want the content. Cue the entrance of the *Skate 2 - Time is Money* game pack, which does all the hard work for you without costing you calloused thumbs and sleepless nights. It will set you back \$6.95 though, so weigh up which is worth more: the time or the money. Also, ponder whether you'll feel like a bit of a dick paying for content you've already paid for. A few years ago this was called a 'Cheat' kids, and they were free.



ONLINE REVIEWS

SUPER STREET FIGHTER II TURBO HD REMIX

Sonic boomage!

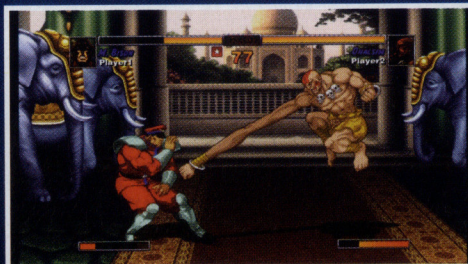


So you're sitting patiently waiting for the *Street Fighter IV* release date to sneak up and tiger uppercut you in the back of the head but want something to tide you over in the in-between time. Forget about jumping into these other so-called fighting titles and stick with the series that beat the arcade world into gaming submission. *Street Fighter II* is back once again, but this time packaged in the *HD Remix* variety. What this means is that you'll be able to enjoy the same ol' *Street Fighter II* with new and improved artwork and all of the glory that 1080p graphics have to offer.

And while some of the colour choices on particular characters are questionable to say the least (a jumping E. Honda will reveal, erm... pink underwear), the various size and weight of each character adds a whole new level of cool. So using the tiny yet ripped Fei Long against a towering and built T. Hawk, will increase your overall satisfaction when you beat him into submission.

As one would expect with a fighting title that slips the word 'Turbo' into the mix, the game is played at an incredible pace. Health bars decline faster than the current world economy and the moves list for each character is short but sweet. If you're new to the series or revisiting after a long break, you'll find yourself challenged on even medium difficulty, as the controls can be quite finicky with what constitutes a correct D-pad roll or appropriate length charge as part of a combo. Even the single-player opponents will give you a run for your money as they tend to adapt to particular patterns in your attack.

But the real test of any *Street Fighter* game is in the multiplayer, and the *Turbo HD Remix* doesn't disappoint in this regard. Local matches



are obviously supported, with Ranked, Player, and Tournament matches offered in the online department. Finding a Quick Match is both fast and easy, with the game doing a good job of matching up your skill level to the appropriate opponent. Lag is also not an issue, with online games running as smoothly as though your foe was sitting next to you.

When push comes to sonic boom, *Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix* is a fantastic arcade title, which has been given a new lease on life through the inclusion of 1080p rendered artwork as well as a solid netcode and fantastic matchmaking.

VERDICT:

A fantastic fighting title that will keep ensure your thumbs are well ready for SFIV

9

WE WANT IT!

In the lull before some big PS3 releases in February, the PlayStation store is set to receive some games that will keep you entertained.



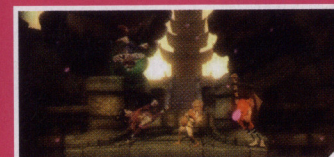
Cuboid

Don't be put off by the name. This game is set to feature puzzle-based gameplay that will test your mental prowess. Complete the puzzles in the least amount of moves for extra kudos.



Burn Zombie Burn!

Although the title pretty much says it all, this top-down game will have you igniting, shooting, bombing and even forcing zombie hordes to dance. We're sold.



Rag Doll Kung Fu: Fists of Plastic

With unconventional controls utilising the SIXAXIS motion-sensors, this multiplayer battle royale title is sure to be the game to load up at any social event.



Texas Cheat 'Em

In this game you'll be able to steal chips, swap cards and use X-ray vision to get the edge.

Gaming, trailers, downloads, friends...

DLC

ROCK ROUNDUP

Everything you need to keep the rock alive and kicking!

If you haven't dabbled in some downloadable ditties for *Rock Band* and/or *Guitar Hero World Tour* you're missing out on a considerable portion of the fun. To date, over 350 downloadable songs have been released for *Rock Band*, and over 73 for *Guitar Hero World Tour*. *Rock Band* is the clear victor when it comes to both quantity and quality, which makes it the best bang for your buck investment out of the two, but *GHWT* has given us some real gems we'd hate to have to do without too – particularly the Aussie Track Pack released just before Australia Day.

We've taken the liberty of making a shortlist of all the tracks we've downloaded so far to give those of you who haven't had a splash in the store yet a glimpse of what's available. These are just some of our favourites, but with music being so subjective and all we imagine there's a great many tracks we've ignored that may appeal to plenty of you. Take this, then, as a teaser and head online to see the rest for yourself!



GUITAR HERO WORLD TOUR

Album: *Death Magnetic* – Metallica

A return to form for the monsters of metal. 'The Day That Never Comes', 'The Unforgiven III' and 'My Apocalypse' amongst others. Tough stuff.

Classic Rock Track Pack
'Rock and Roll Band' Boston
'Hot Blooded' Foreigner
'Jessie's Girl' Rick Springfield

'No Rain' Blind Melon (single)

'Another Way to Die' Jack White & Alicia Keys (single)
 The song from the latest James Bond jaunt, *Quantum of Solace*. Catchy, but a bit simple.

The Jimi Hendrix Track Pack (songs not available separately)
'If 6 Was 9'
'Little Wing'
'Fire (Live at Woodstock)'
 What must we say here? The greatest guitarist of all time. Download these now.

The Smashing Pumpkins Track Pack
'G.L.O.W.'
'1979'
'The Everlasting Gaze'

Nirvana Track Pack
'You Know You're Right'
'Sliver'
'Negative Creep'
 'You Know You're Right' is amongst our favourite Nirvana tracks ever and it really is astonishingly good fun to sing. With peaks and troughs, it's a cheese-grater to the vocal chords but still so good.

The Eagles Track Pack
'Frail Grasp On The Big Picture'
'Life in the Fast Lane'
'One of These Nights'

Travis Barker Track Pack
'What's My Age Again?' Blink-182
'Lycanthrope' +44

'Low (Travis Barker Remix)' Flo Rida featuring T-Pain
 Actually, 'What's My Age Again?' is the only one really worth bothering with here.

Australian Rock Track Pack
'Tomorrow' silverchair
'Dimension' Wolfmother
'Outtathaway!' The Vines
 A great pack, although we maintain The Vines had their shot and fumbled it. Could've been any number of 'chair songs ('Israel's Son' springs to mind) but 'Tomorrow' is a bloody good place to start. 'Dimension' is also one of the more under-used Wolfmother tracks too, and one of their best.

Bruce Springsteen Pack
'Born to Run'
'My Lucky Day'
 The Boss. That is all.

ROCK BAND

'Fortunate Son' Creedence Clearwater Revival (single)
 It's a cover, but it's a damn good one. A lot of fun this one.

'Bang a Gong' T.Rex (single)

'My Sharona' The Knack (single)
 This is a song everyone seems to want to play, but usually have no idea just how long it actually is. It just keeps going and going.

'Joker & the Thief' Wolfmother (single)
 One of the best downloadable tracks so far, with some great drumming in particular.

Metallica 01
'Ride the Lightning'
'Blackened'
'...And Justice for All'

Queens of the Stone Age 01
'3's & 7's'
'Little Sister'
'Sick, Sick, Sick'

Police 01
'Can't Stand Losing You'
'Synchronicity II'

'Roxanne'
 'Roxanne' is hilarious to sing – lots of high stuff to deal with.

'Heroes' David Bowie (also part of David Bowie 01)
 An easy track, nice and gentle. Bloody long though, and bit repetitive.

'War Pigs' Black Sabbath (also part of Black Sabbath 01)

'I Fought the Law' The Clash (also part of Punk 01)

'My Iron Lung' Radiohead (single)

'Last Train to Clarksville' The Monkees (single)
 More fun than you'd think. A few more 'novelty' tracks like this wouldn't go astray actually.

'All the Small Things' Blink-182 (single)
 Fun crowd pleaser. Good for a group.

'The Number of the Beast' Iron Maiden (single)

'Interstate Love Song' Stone Temple Pilots (single)

'Die, All Right!' The Hives (single)

'Hard to Handle' The Black Crowes (single)

Oasis 01
'Wonderwall'
'Live Forever'
'Don't Look Back in Anger'
 You can save a little money and skip on 'Live Forever' if you want, it's a little meh.

'We Care a Lot' Faith No More (single)

'Calling Dr. Love' KISS (single)

'More Than a Feeling' Boston (also part of Boston 01)
 This is a must. In the absence of 'Freebird' by Lynyrd Skynyrd, there isn't a better track to end a night than 'More Than A Feeling'.

'The Perfect Drug' Nine Inch Nails
(Nine Inch Nails 01)

'This Ain't a Scene, It's an Arms Race' Fall Out Boy (also part of Scene 01)
It's a goddamn arse-face.

'Zero' Smashing Pumpkins (single)

'Hammerhead' The Offspring (single)
Fast, driving rock. The Offspring the way we liked them before.

Weezer 01
'The Greatest Man That Ever Lived' 'Dreamin' 'Troublemaker'
'The Greatest Man That Ever Lived' is a tough track to master, but the changes in pace and style make for a unique and catchy tune.

'Toxicity' System of a Down (single)
Not as hard to sing as the game suggests, but tougher all-around than most. A nice, crunchy track to wake up the neighbours.

'Runnin' Wild' Airbourne (also part of Roadrunner Records 01)
One of the few Aussie bands to get a look in on Rock Band - which still strikes us as odd considering producer Dan Teasdale is Australian. Still, we've got AC/DC Live: Rock Band Track Pack we guess, and that's as true blue as it comes.

Album: Screaming for Vengeance - Judas Priest
'You've Got Another Thing Comin' is really the only track we were bothered with here, but you guys might disagree.

Album: Doolittle - Pixies
'Debaser' and 'Monkey Gone To Heaven' are amongst the top picks here, although some are arguing the Pixies' best song was 'Where Is My Mind' - from the closing credits of Fight Club if you recall. But this song didn't feature on Doolittle.

Album: The Best of The Who (Rock Band Edition) - The Who
It's all good here, really. 'Baba O'Riley' 'Eminence Front' and 'Who Are You' are standouts, remembering 'Won't Get Fooled Again' features on the Rock Band disc, and 'Pinball Wizard' will be on Rock Band 2.

Album: Peace Sells... but Who's Buying? - Megadeth

Album: Moving Pictures - Rush

'She Sells Sanctuary' The Cult (single)
Great track. Makes us think of Grand Theft Auto: Vice City.

'Love Spreads' The Stone Roses (single)

'Sorrow' Bad Religion (single)

Album: Blood Sugar Sex Magik - Red Hot Chili Peppers
'Breaking the Girl' 'Suck My Kiss' and 'Under the Bridge' are among the obvious hits from this quite lengthy album. Bring back the '90s.

'Bad to the Bone' George Thorogood & the Destroyers (single)
Great at parties, good fun for all parts. Plus, it reminds us of Major Payne. Classic.

The Offspring 01
'Gone Away' 'Pretty Fly (for a White Guy)' 'Self Esteem'
Good pack. They're all quite easy, but everyone knows these songs.

Album: Dr. Feelgood - Mötley Crüe
'Kickstart My Heart', which is an awesome song, was the only one we grabbed here. Fast and lively. 'Dr. Feelgood' is okay too though, we guess.

Nirvana 01
'Breed' 'Lounge Act' 'On a Plain' 'Polly' 'Something in the Way' 'Stay Away' 'Territorial Pissings'
Basically, Nevermind without 'Smells Like Teen Spirit' and such. Some of these are quite decent, although some are a little underwhelming. 'Polly' on drums, for instance, only features half-a-dozen tons.

'Dammit' Blink-182 (single)
Hard. And fast. Highly recommended though. Appears on the Guitar Hero World Tour disc too.

The Presidents of the United States of America 01
'Dune Buggy' 'Feather Pluck'n' 'Ladybug'
A bunch of PUSA's lesser known hits here. A lot of you probably would've preferred, say, 'Peaches' or 'Mach 5' - but these are good tracks. It's worth noting 'Lump' will appear on Rock Band 2.

Album: The Colour and the Shape - Foo Fighters
Probably the best download so far. 'Monkey Wrench' 'Hey, Johnny Park!' 'New Way Home' 'My Hero' 'Up in Arms' and more, this is wall-to-wall rock goodness. Buy the whole thing, seriously. 'A heads-up, 'Everlong' is not included here as it appears on Rock Band 2.

Dead Kennedys 01
'California Über Alles' 'Holiday in Cambodia' 'Police Truck'
A ton of fun these lot. The unique jangly DK sound is well-represented by these three punk classics. Slightly censored, but it's hardly noticeable, and it doesn't mean you can't curse away yourself.

The Killers 01
'Mr. Brightside' 'Spaceman' 'Smile Like You Mean It'
'Mr Brightside' is a good Rock Band track, simple but busy. 'Spaceman' is kinda catchy too.

'Jesus Christ Pose' Soundgarden (single)

'Pretty Noose' Soundgarden (single)

Album: The Singles 1992-2003 - No Doubt
One of the aims during Rock Band 2 development was to add more female singers, which explains the Alanis Morrisette on there. No Doubt should help here too. 'Ex-Girlfriend', 'Bathwater' and 'Just a Girl' are the ones we recognised. They're okay.

Foo Fighters 01
'This Is a Call' 'Times Like These' 'DOA'
Another smattering of Fooeys, add 'em to the list. 'This Is a Call' is probably the best one here, fun-wise.

Lenny Kravitz 01
'Are You Gonna Go My Way' 'Freedom Train' 'Let Love Rule' 'Mr. Cab Driver'
'Are You Gonna Go My Way' is top notch; seriously rocking. It appears on Guitar Hero World Tour too, for your information.

Steve Miller Band 01
'Space Cowboy' 'Take the Money and Run' 'The Joker'
Don't confuse 'Space Cowboy' with 'The Joker'. You're probably thinking of 'The Joker'. "Some people call me the space cowboy, some call me the gangster of love..." - that's 'The Joker'. A great song with four people, nice to wind-down to. 'The Joker' appears on the Guitar Hero World Tour disc.

Album: Ten - Pearl Jam (available March 24, 2009)
This will kick arse. 'Once', 'Even Flow', 'Why Go', 'Black', 'Jeremy', 'Porch' and more - bring it on. 'Alive' won't feature here, it's on the Rock Band 2 disc.

MORE PLEASE!

There's a surprisingly lengthy list of bands yet to receive the Rock Band treatment. Here are a few.

Green Day



An American rock trio formed in 1987, Green Day has sold over 65 million records. We'd love to see Dookie available, with tracks like 'Longview' and 'When I Come Around'.

Fuel



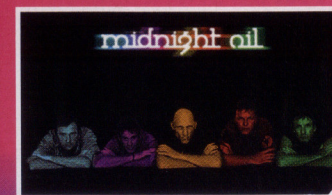
What about these guys? Their debut album, Sunburn, was fantastic and well suited to Rock Band. 'Shimmer', 'Bittersweet', 'Jesus or a Gun', 'Sunburn' - all excellent tracks.

Powderfinger



How about some Aussie stuff? Powderfinger are one of Australia's most consistent rock bands. How about 'Belter' from Two Hands?

Midnight Oil



Speaking of Aussie stuff, you can't go past Midnight Oil. We've had AC/DC, and when it comes to ocker, these blokes are the next step. Bring on 'Power and the Passion' - we want to play that killer drum solo!

TOP 10 THINGS TO DO IN METAL GEAR SOLID 4: GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS

Think you've played the hell out of Snake's last mission? Think again!

Snake has come, saved the world for the last time, and crept back into his burrow, but Guru Kojima made damn sure gamers could milk his last (?) Snake for what it's worth. Snake's mission may take him through a linear series of maps but there are countless hidden hijinks to perpetrate along the way. While we could've listed twice as many, we've boiled down our Top 10 favourite things we feel you have to experience in *Metal Gear Solid 4*. So be a good gun-loving patriot and get on the case, would you?

1 SLEAZE BALL SNAKE

Make you sure you've picked up the digital camera with the Mk. II during a mission briefing on the Nomad. Now wait until the second stage of a boss battle against a Beauty when they come at you in their saucy form. Keep your distance for around three minutes. Eventually the world will go all white. Whip out your camera and they'll pose while you click away.

2 VIVA LA SNAKE

Become instant allies with the locals in the first two acts by rediscovering Snake's hood from the opening scene in Act I, and a new disguise for Act II. In Act I the hood is in a locker in the North-East room of the underground Militia stronghold. To score the disguise for Act II, engage the PMC immediately to stop them executing their rebel captors. Keep the rebels alive and they'll open a nearby room with the disguise inside.

3 MEDIEVAL SNAKE

Treat Snake as a Ken doll and dress him up in Altair's gear from *Assassin's Creed*

before slicing enemies up from behind. Either bag the Assassin Emblem or use the cheating passcode at the Extras screen: aottrykmyn. Note, the Extras screen only becomes available after you've finished the game. It's yours once you meet the Mk. II in Act I on your next play through.

4 METAL GEAR - TOE-TO-TOE!

Spice up the Rex-Ray fight by relying on Rex's melee attack. Hover a few paces away from Ray and blast him with the minigun. When Liquid raises his dukes in defence, charge forward and attack a bunch of times. If Ray hits the canvas deliver a quick crunching blow (there are variations to this final blow if you move the fight around the area, too).

5 LET'S GO GHOSTBUSTERS

Make sure you have the digital camera and head to Shadow Moses. There are 30 ghosts in this area you can snap with the camera, but they can't be seen in play unless you're holding the Sorrow Doll. Hideo Kojima is here as a ghost too. Venture inside Otacon's office and look above the *Policenauts* poster to photograph the designer's spectre.

6 KNIFE THE VAMPIRE

Add some spice to the Vamp encounter by turning it into a knife fight. The key to the perfect strike is to wait for Vamp to come at you with his kick combo. Dodge out of the way then run up behind him and either shock or slash. Wear the Raiden mask to make this battle personal.

7 CRACK OUT TORNADES!

Become the perfect weapon by saving your pennies and buying the Tanegashima rifle. The great thing about the rifle is that every third time you fire it outdoors it unleashes a huge tornado! The only set back is that it's ridiculously priced at 1,000,000 DP each! Buy it on a Wednesday or Sunday to yield a 20% discount or in Act V for a 50% discount!

8 GET THE SOLAR GUN

Use non-lethal weapons during each of the Boss Fights – including when they're in their suits (and including the Act I Frog fight – don't shoot them off the walls or they'll die) – and afterwards a small statues resembling their armour will be left in the area. Pick up all five and you'll unlock the Solar Gun on your next play through.

9 COP A KISS FROM LIQUID OCELOT

Bet you thought you'd never see this. During the Snake Eater portion of the final fight wait for Ocelot to grab Snake into a chokehold and... do nothing. Instead of mashing Snake's head, Ocelot will give him a kiss on the cheek and let him go.

10 ROLL THE FROGS

During the game's first boss fight against the frogs, instead of hanging back like a pansy and picking them off, throw yourself into the melee! Use your newfound drum and roll them down when they get into a group. The handy thing is when they're knocked out they'll stay KO'd indefinitely.





➤ Metal Gear – toe-to-toe!



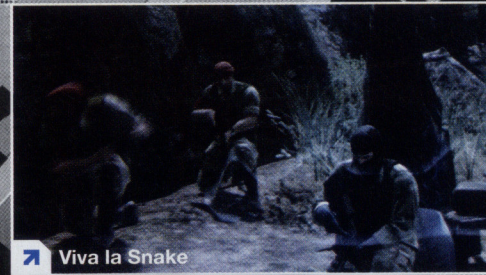
➤ Roll the frogs



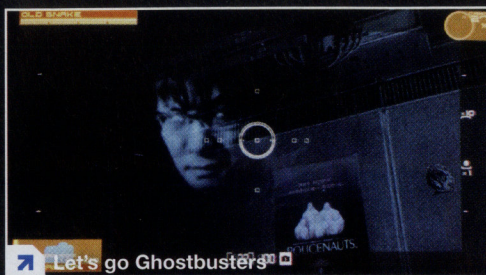
➤ Cop a kiss



➤ Crack out tornadoes



➤ Viva la Snake



➤ Let's go Ghostbusters



➤ Get the Solar Gun



➤ Knife the vampire



➤ Medieval Snake



➤ Sleaze ball Snake

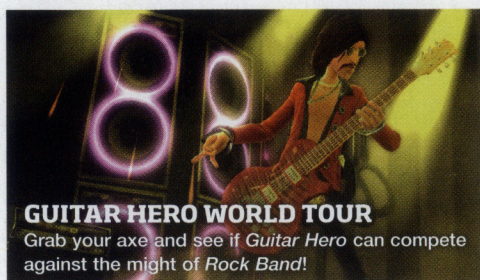
ON THE DISC

21 playable demos for your PS3-related pleasure!



METAL GEAR SOLID 4: GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS

Fight your way through the opening stage and see what all the fuss is about!



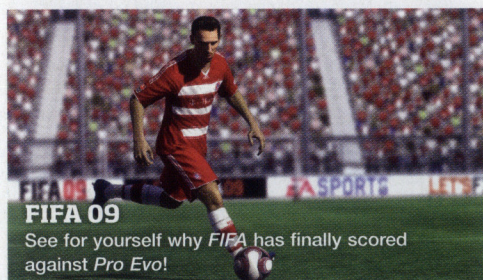
GUITAR HERO WORLD TOUR

Grab your axe and see if *Guitar Hero* can compete against the might of *Rock Band*!



MOTORSTORM PACIFIC RIFT

Try out the sequel to the PS3's most popular racing game!



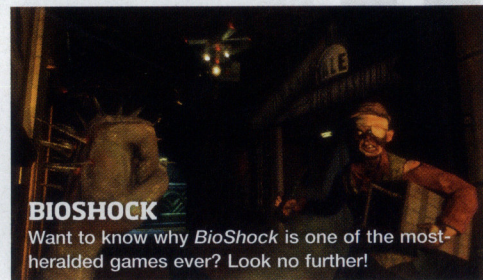
FIFA 09

See for yourself why *FIFA* has finally scored against *Pro Evo*!



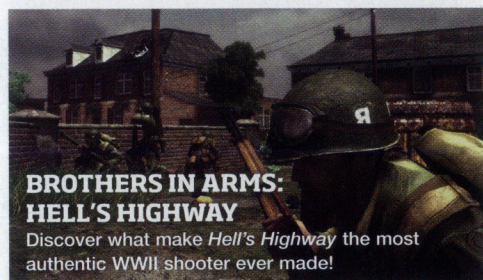
ALONE IN THE DARK: INFERNO

Weren't we always told to never play with fire?



BIOSHOCK

Want to know why *BioShock* is one of the most-heralded games ever? Look no further!



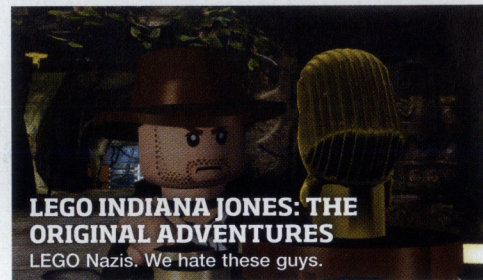
BROTHERS IN ARMS: HELL'S HIGHWAY

Discover what make *Hell's Highway* the most authentic WWII shooter ever made!



LEGO BATMAN: THE VIDEOGAME

Take apart Gotham City, block by block!



LEGO INDIANA JONES: THE ORIGINAL ADVENTURES

LEGO Nazis. We hate these guys.



NBA 2K9

Slam dunk or updated dribble? You be the judge!



PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 2009

Has the reigning champ stalled somewhat? See for yourself!



VALKYRIA CHRONICLES

Get lost in this rich adventure from Japan!

VIDEOS



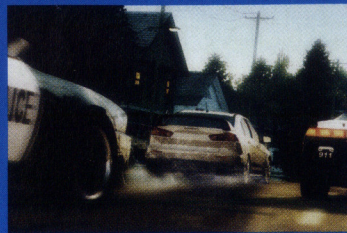
BioShock



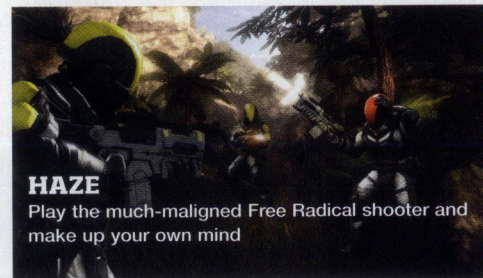
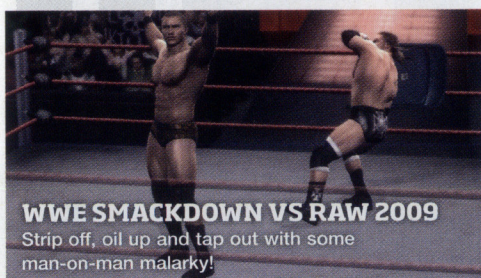
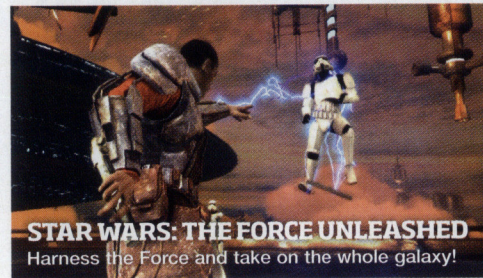
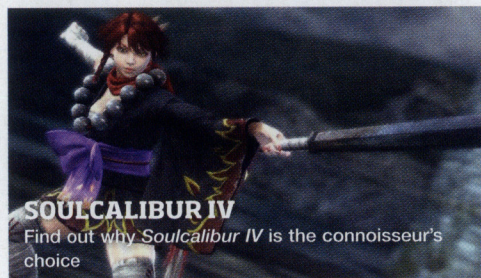
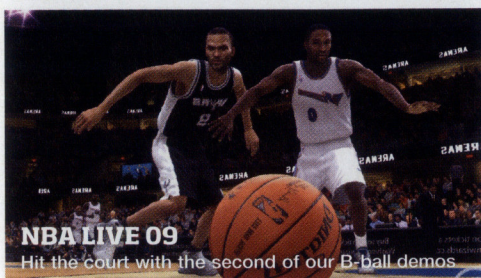
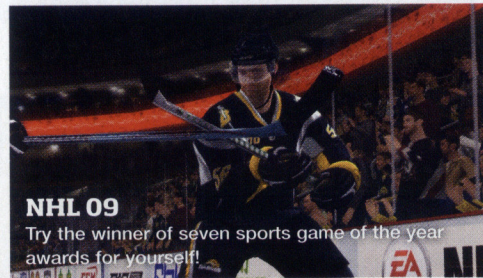
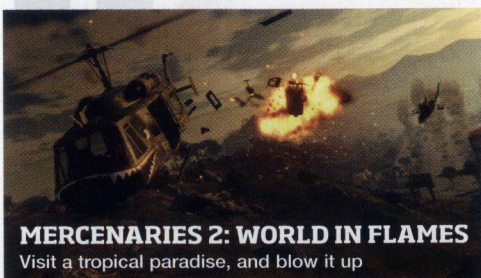
BioShock 2 Teaser



Mirror's Edge Story Part 2



Need For Speed Undercover



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Babes



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INDEX

All the games that matter on PS3!

WANTED

My precious...



AFL 2009

Footy on consoles has a past dodgier than Barry Hall's temper trigger, so local developer Big Ant have been brave in nabbing the official licence. We're hoping they'll kick goals, especially in these days of up-to-date via net stats in sports titles. GO TIGES!



NOBY NOBY BOY

If *Katamari Damacy* broke your brain and you're up for more, then Keita Takahashi's latest for the PSN won't disappoint. You are a worm that's rewarded for stretchiness, swallowing animals and then pooping them out your back end – uh, we think.



SUPERCAR CHALLENGE

The sequel to the good-but-could-have-been-better *Ferrari Challenge* is trundling down the production line, tweaking criticisms of its predecessor and adding wheels of awesome not necessarily from Italy, like the Bugatti Veyron and Aston Martin DB9 (drooll).



TEKKEN 6

2009's shaping up to be the year of the fighter, with the latest in the popular fist-fest franchise taking on the big daddy of them all, *SFIV*, boasting 40 fighters (including robots!), combo-combining, a souped-up graphics engine and online support.



UFC 2009 UNDISPUTED

More biff! Just when you thought it was safe to go back to the octagon, the Ultimate Fighting Championship and 80+ of its hottest mixed martial arts brawlers finally go next gen, with promises of an all-new engine, photorealism and customisable fighters.



UNCHARTED 2: AMONG THIEVES

The original's a hard act to follow, yet we're slaving for this like our saliva glands are set to 'drown'. With updated game mechanics, Nathan's on a quest to uncover the mysteries of Italian explorer Marco Polo, and even has new totty in the shape of Chloe.

SIMPLY THE BEST...

The best of the best of the best of the *best*

ADVENTURE



GRAND THEFT AUTO IV

"GTAIV is a game 10 out of 10 was designed for – a game that takes your rising, constantly spiralling expectations and vapourises them with a product so sublime you'll tell your grandkids about it."

DEVELOPER: Rockstar North PUBLISHER: Rockstar PLAYERS: 1-16

10



ASSASSIN'S CREED

"Assassin's Creed is a masterpiece, plain and simple. This game wouldn't be better if Jesus Christ himself designed it. After *Assassin's Creed*, the world of videogaming seems like a different place."

DEVELOPER: Ubisoft Montreal PUBLISHER: Ubisoft PLAYERS: 1

10



THE ELDER SCROLLS IV: OBLIVION

"The first genuine classic next gen RPG. What *Oblivion* achieves is technically monstrous, to the extent that it can almost be overwhelming to most players. Even post-*Fallout 3*, this is a must play for RPG fans."

DEVELOPER: Bethesda PUBLISHER: Ubisoft PLAYERS: 1

10



LITTLE BIGPLANET

"By rejigging the traditional platformer with physics and an accessible level creator, *LittleBigPlanet* becomes something delightfully simple and postmodern – a game that everyone can play, and endlessly recreate."

DEVELOPER: Media Molecule PUBLISHER: Sony PLAYERS: 1-4

10



MGS4: GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS

"An incredibly layered gaming experience that is almost inexhaustible. Probably the best game available on the PlayStation 3, and definitely the best exclusive. Buy and play this videogame now."

DEVELOPER: Kojima Productions PUBLISHER: Atari PLAYERS: 1-16

10



UNCHARTED: DRAKE'S FORTUNE

"The only bad thing about it is it ends, but hot damn it takes you on a transcendently enjoyable ride. There's no reason why you shouldn't buy this game."

DEVELOPER: Naughty Dog PUBLISHER: Sony PLAYERS: 1

10



DEAD SPACE

"The best survival horror title this generation – by an absolute country mile. *Dead Space* combines a smart story with incredible visuals, sound design to create what is arguably the scariest video game ever made. A must-play on every possible level."

DEVELOPER: EA Redwood Shores PUBLISHER: EA PLAYERS: 1

9



FALLOUT 3

"Taking the solid base of *Oblivion* and placing into a post apocalyptic wasteland always sounded like a great idea – and *Fallout 3* proves that concept brilliantly. This is a game that will astound you with the sheer depth and enormity of its incredible vision."

DEVELOPER: Bethesda PUBLISHER: Red Ant PLAYERS: 1

9

SHOOTER



RESISTANCE 2

"Visually inconsistent, but it's difficult to criticise a game that attempts so much, and succeeds so often. Peerless in terms of size and scale, *Resistance 2* provides a brilliantly rounded package for fans of first person shooters"

DEVELOPER: Insomniac PUBLISHER: Sony PLAYERS: 1-64

9



KILLZONE 2

"Visually *Killzone 2* runs through the competition like a bull in the proverbial china shop. Lucky then, that the game's design and story matches the lofty production values. *Killzone 2* is the first-person shooter evolved."

DEVELOPER: Guerrilla
PUBLISHER: Sony
PLAYERS: 1-16

10



BIOSHOCK

"As a sub-par port, minus the promised extra content, *BioShock* is a disappointment. BUT you'd be silly to miss out on what is undoubtedly one of the landmark games of this generation so far. In many ways, this is a must play."

DEVELOPER: 2K Marin
PUBLISHER: 2K
PLAYERS: 1

8



CALL OF DUTY 4: MODERN WARFARE

"A fantastic shooter with a dizzying array of combat scenarios and packed with bleeding-edge military hardware. *COD4* is one of the tightest shooters we've ever played."

DEVELOPER: Infinity Ward PUBLISHER: Activision PLAYERS: 1-16

10



WARHAWK

"Tighter than a bull's arse on fight night and smoother than a glass of Guinness, *Warhawk* is a seriously superior piece of software. Multiplayer only, but you'd be barking mad to miss it."

DEVELOPER: Incognito
PUBLISHER: Sony
PLAYERS: 1-32

9



THE ORANGE BOX

"*The Orange Box* is ripe, in season, and packed with vitamin value. With five quality titles, including the sublime *Portal*, there truly is something here for everybody. An unmissable package."

DEVELOPER: Valve
PUBLISHER: EA
PLAYERS: 1-16

9



BROTHERS IN ARMS: HELL'S HIGHWAY

"Momentarily plugging the huge gap left by *Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare*, *Hell's Highway* works by ploughing new ground as a shooter. Well-balanced squad mechanics are combined with real intensity and emotion."

DEVELOPER: Gearbox
PUBLISHER: Ubisoft
PLAYERS: 1-16

8



BATTLEFIELD: BAD COMPANY

"Taking destructibility to a new insanely high level, *Bad Company* is a title unafraid to push new ground. With some excellent characterisation, and some of the best multiplayer in the business, it's easily the best *Battlefield* title on console to date."

DEVELOPER: DICE
PUBLISHER: EA
PLAYERS: 1-20

7



FAR CRY 2

"At times overstretching itself, *Far Cry 2*'s breath taking ambition can often be its undoing, but it's still one of the best shooters out there. Plus, setting stuff on fire is still a ridiculous amount of fun."

DEVELOPER: Ubisoft Montreal
PUBLISHER: Ubisoft
PLAYERS: 1-16

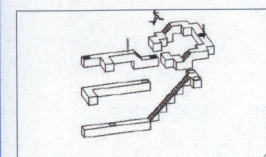
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TOP 5

PSP PUZZLERS

ECHOCHROME

Kicking colour to the kerb, this puzzler takes more than a little inspiration from the likes of reality-bending MC Escher for a 3D trip that REALLY challenges the grey matter.



EXIT 2

You're a stealthy, caffeine-fuelled lifesaver (no, not the type with a hole you suck), in this funky platform puzzler for those who like to give their brainy bits some work.



LOCOROCO2

Blobbing out has never been as much fun as this, as you lead your gelatinous charges through a hyper-coloured world in a quest to save it from nasty Mojan raiders.



LUMINES II

An ace fusion of music and puzzleness that surpasses the original in every way, it's kind of like *Tetris* on its side – except it's not, other than for the presence of blocks.



PATAPON

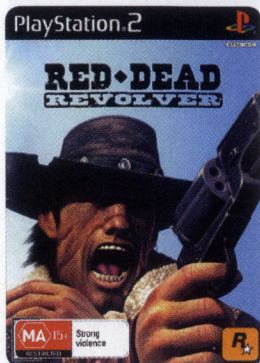
Rhythm, puzzle and strategy elements have a three-way collision in an art gallery, as you become the God of little dudes fighting to save their land – rhythmically.



INDEX

All the games that matter on PS3!

UNDER THE RADAR



RED DEAD REVOLVER

When you think Rockstar Games, the first thing that comes to mind is GTA. Well, unless you're weird and come up with something like *Bully* or *Midnight Club* – maybe even *Max Payne*. However, we'd wager few will be jumping up and down squealing, "Ooh! Ooh! *Red Dead Revolver*!"

Which is a shame, for this rollicking third person 'Wild West' shooter is worth remembering. Starting life as a potential 3D remix of arcade classic *Express Raider*, except not really as that was from Data East and was glued to a train, *RDR* was saved from oblivion by Rockstar after Capcom gave up on it. The cooler-than-thou developer gave it a spaghetti western lick of paint, added 'tude aplenty and injected a whole wagonload of style. What was born stands as a great homage to the classic stringy pasta westerns from the likes of Clint Eastwood and Lee van Cleef and the music of the genre (Ennio Morricone might have had a few, "Hey! What's my lawyer's number again?" moments listening to the soundtrack), as well as a great fun third-person arcade-styled shooter.

Sure, the targeting could be finicky at times, and yeah the old time film effects grated on occasion, but for sheer atmosphere *RDR* delivered in spades – and what a welcome change from those overused war/post-apocalyptic future premises.

There are strong whispers that Rockstar is preparing a PS3-based sequel – we *really* hope it is – but even if they're not, we'll always have the original to stick on when our trigger fingers start a' itchin' and we crave a bit of 1800s-styled varmint vengeance. Bring on that 'Quick Draw' mode again – YEEHAW! Ahem...



RACING



PURE

"Pure shot straight from nowhere to rub *MotorStorm*'s face in it's glorious graphics and watertight gameplay. It's not as varied as its main competitor, but damn does it play well."

DEVELOPER: Black Rock PUBLISHER: Funtastic PLAYERS: 1-16

9



GRAN TURISMO 5: PROLOGUE

"An anemic game package that somehow survives by being what is quite possibly the greatest example of audio-visual excellence on the PlayStation 3 thus far. Well worth checking out."

DEVELOPER: Polyphony Digital PUBLISHER: Sony PLAYERS: 1-16

8



COLIN MCRÆ: DIRT

"The great man rests in peace, but his legacy lives on with this stellar racer that brilliantly bridges the seemingly impenetrable gap between arcade and sim. A seamlessly presented title that juggles depth and accessibility with a precise gusto."

DEVELOPER: Codemasters PUBLISHER: Atari PLAYERS: 1-16

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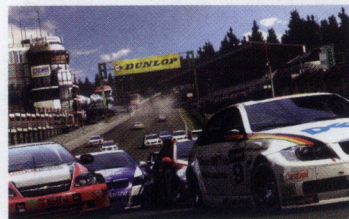


SEGA RALLY

"To appreciate *Sega Rally* you'll have to continually remind yourself that it's a deceptively life-like caricature of a hardcore rallying experience. Not brain surgery, but it delivers the fun in big muddy spades."

DEVELOPER: Sega Driving Studio PUBLISHER: Sega PLAYERS: 1-6

9



RACE DRIVER GRID

"This bastard rock n' roll son of V8 Supercars and *Colin McRae: DiRT* is hot. Your lower jaw will relax. Your eyelids will take five. And you'll start to drool. Shame it ditched its sim roots, but the V8 DLC has us all a quiver."

DEVELOPER: Codemasters PUBLISHER: Atari PLAYERS: 1-12

9



FERRARI CHALLENGE

Ferrari Challenge will surprise you by being that little bit better than you thought it could ever be. A hardcore racing sim that thrives on the details, this is a suitable title to fend off the petrol heads until *Gran Turismo 5* arrives to rewrite the racing handbook.

DEVELOPER: System 3 PUBLISHER: Red Ant PLAYERS: 1-16

8



MOTORSTORM

In our humble opinion *MotorStorm* was the best launch title on the fledgling PS3 – and arguably it's one of the greatest launch titles of all time. Defining next gen racing as a platform upon which smart AI and terrain deformation could thrive, *MotorStorm* reinvented the arcade racer.

DEVELOPER: Evolution Studios PUBLISHER: Sony PLAYERS: 1-16

10



MIDNIGHT CLUB: LOS ANGELES

Within its niche sub-genre, *Midnight Club: Los Angeles* reigns supreme. With well designed, rolling objectives, and an insane amount of customisation, *MC: LA* manages to rise above the rabble, easily beating off *Need for Speed Undercover* at its own game.

DEVELOPER: Rockstar San Diego PUBLISHER: Rockstar PLAYERS: 1-16

7



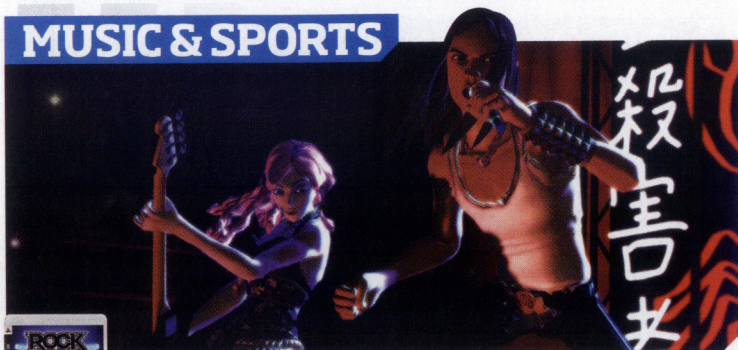
BURNOUT PARADISE

"You'll lament the thoughtless removal of splitscreen and the lack of a retry button, but you'll marvel at the slick frame rate, the sun drenched city, and Criterion's stellar commitment to free downloadable content. Awesome."

DEVELOPER: Criterion PUBLISHER: EA PLAYERS: 1-16

9

MUSIC & SPORTS

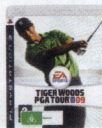


ROCK BAND

"A triumph. Harmonix has found the formula for a truly great music game – immaculate presentation, great tunes and a job for as many of your friends as possible. You wanted the best, you got the best."

DEVELOPER: Harmonix PUBLISHER: EA PLAYERS: 1-4

10



TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 09

"Golf, for most of the populace, is about as exciting as watching paint dry in an old folk's home, so it's testament to EA that this game actually works well."

DEVELOPER: EA PUBLISHER: EA PLAYERS: 1-16

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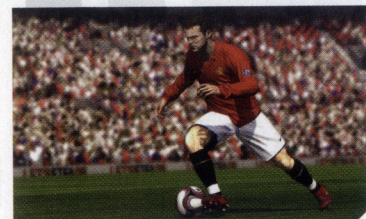


SKATE 2

"Despite some frame rate issues, *SKATE 2* is undoubtedly one of the greatest sports game's ever conceived. The controls are flawless, the city is dense, the balance is sublime."

DEVELOPER: EA Black Box PUBLISHER: EA PLAYERS: 1-8

9

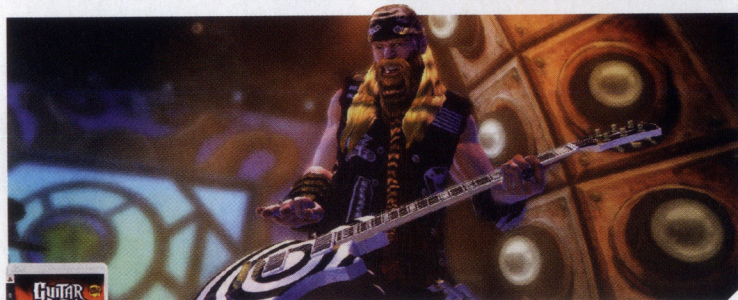


FIFA 09

"With it's new momentum physics, stellar visuals, and engaging gameplay, 2009 is finally the year that the *FIFA* franchise manages to leap the perennial hurdle that is *Pro Evolution Soccer*. Now Konami have to play catch up."

DEVELOPER: EA Canada PUBLISHER: EA PLAYERS: 1-20

9



GUITAR HERO WORLD TOUR

"It's a tough call – *GHWT* blitzes *Rock Band* in terms of equipment, but struggles to match up to its sublime functionality. Still, it's an unmissable multiplayer experience."

DEVELOPER: Neversoft PUBLISHER: Activision PLAYERS: 1-4

9



NBA 2K9

"Basketball's hardly the national sport of Australia, but that doesn't mean that the game can't be fun. This is a decent representation of Barack Obama's favourite sport. Fans of basketball should check this out."

DEVELOPER: 2K PUBLISHER: 2K PLAYERS: 1-10

7



VIRTUA TENNIS 3

"Still one of the few titles that manages to pull off true 1080p high definition visuals, *Virtua Tennis*, to this day, still remains unchallenged for the title of best tennis game ever made."

DEVELOPER: SEGA PUBLISHER: SEGA PLAYERS: 1-4

8



FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 3

"Featuring a dual analogue control system (that paved the way for the sublime *SKATE*) *Fight Night Round 3* is perhaps one of the greatest sports games ever conceived. Bone-crunching."

DEVELOPER: EA Chicago PUBLISHER: EA PLAYERS: 1-2

8



TOP 5

COLOURFUL PS3 GAMES

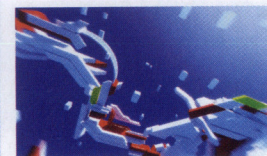
LITTLEBIGPLANET

Sometimes we get so caught up in the cuteness and challenge of some of the puzzles without stepping back just to look at this multi-hued marvel. Try it sometime!



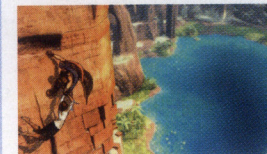
MIRROR'S EDGE

At first sight we almost reached for our shades, such was the vividness of colour in this 3D platformer – bring on more of it we say, it's time to banish the drab!



PRINCE OF PERSIA

Every scene's an absolute picture of beauty, and the best thing is that despite the comic-esque overtones, the colours used are natural, yet gloriously eye-popping.



RATCHET & CLANK: TOOLS OF DESTRUCTION

With *R&C*, developer Insomniac accomplished something many others could learn from, a fantasy world that doesn't know the meaning of the word 'monochromatic'.



WIPEOUT HD

So, you're after some day-glo hues with your ever-so-pointy racing? Look no further than this piece of genius which brings the vibes sonically, 'gamingly' AND colourfully.



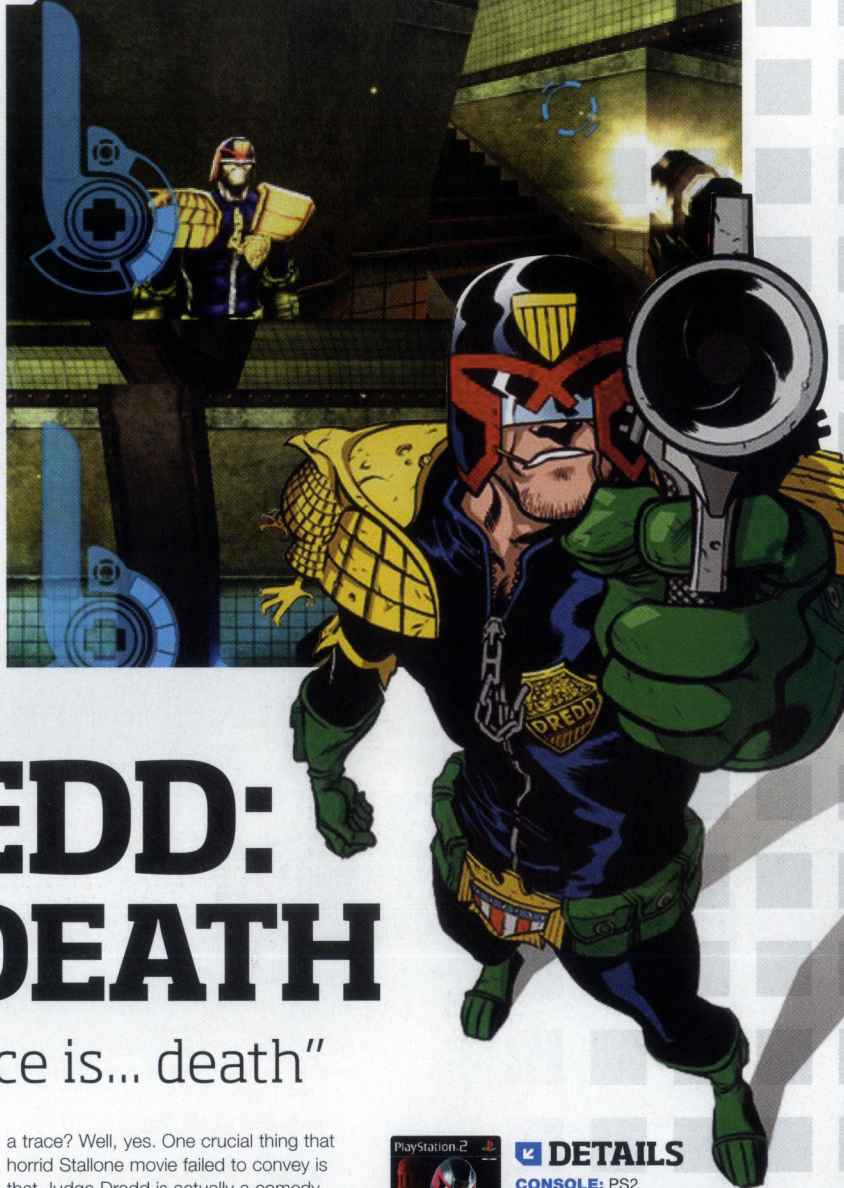
INFAMOUS

■ Judge Dredd: Powerful, unflinching, not the greatest speller



2003

■ Judge Dredd was a UK reggae artist. 11 of his songs were banned



JUDGE DREDD: DREDD VS. DEATH

"The crime is life. The sentence is... death"

One of the best games ever made by UK developer Rebellion, *Dredd vs. Death* was a fine example of one thing the British do better than anyone: noble, spectacular failures.

Let us not mince words. *Judge Dredd: Dredd vs. Death* was a failure. It failed to sell, and failed to warrant a sequel. It failed to draw in mainstream punters, and failed to create new fans for the Dredd franchise. It failed to capture the imaginations of gamers, and it's even failed to inspire any kind of cult following.

Why did it fail? Because it was uncompromising. This was one of the most faithful video game adaptations of a comic book super hero ever made.

For those who came in late, you control Judge Dredd, one of a class of ruthless law enforcers in 22nd Century New York — Mega City One. You are judge, jury, and executioner rolled into one. If you see a crime in progress, you are jolly well entitled to dole out punishment to fit the crime.

It was at this point that many a casual gamer got discouraged, and many a lazy game reviewer got shirty. What those hacks failed to realise was that for petty

offences, it was usually better to arrest a perp than to blow his head off. The score you got at the end of each level was the sum of the years of jail time you metered out. Conversely, if you played fast and loose with the law, internal affairs would ventilate you — game over.

Sure, it was a highly linear first-person shooter. But there was a palpable satisfaction you'd get from running around and putting all those perps behind bars. This game encouraged you to THINK like Judge Dredd. That's the beauty of one-dimensional comic characters; you can project all your pent-up malice into their bloody escapades.

The licensing arrangement behind *Dredd vs. Death* was unusual. Rebellion actually bought the 2000AD comic company, and the rights to all their thousands of warped characters. *Rogue Trooper* was another one of their unfairly ignored masterworks — if Rebellion stays in business long enough, we can expect gamers to shovel indifference upon faithful adaptations of ABC Warriors, Strontium Dog, Slaine, Nemesis the Warlock, and more.

Does it matter that Dredd sank without

a trace? Well, yes. One crucial thing that horrid Stallone movie failed to convey is that Judge Dredd is actually a comedy — black as pitch, and bloodier than a butcher's floor. Between blasting vampires, zombies, and boss monsters that belong on black metal album covers, there was satire and slapstick to keep it real.

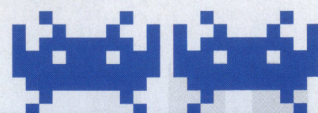
Alas, there ain't no justice. But in the darkest corners of the bargain bins, there is Judge Dredd. And he is... the law!

— James Cottee

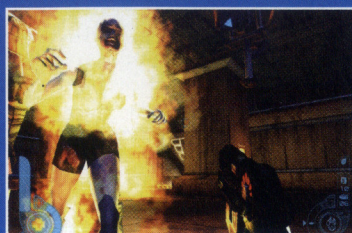


■ DETAILS

CONSOLE: PS2
DEVELOPER: REBELLION
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: UK
CURRENT APPROXIMATE PRICE: \$10 (EBAY)



SHOOT TO KILL



One sick feature of *Dredd vs. Death* was that the standard weapon, the Lawgiver Mk. 3, was exactly like the gun Dredd packs in the comics. It fires six kinds of bullets: standard execution, ricochet, armour-piercing, high-explosive, incendiary, and heat-seeker — each with its own devious tactical possibilities.

AUSTRALIAN!

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KINGDOM
// SPEED RACER
// HELLBOY II
// DEAD SET
// WALL-E

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2009's most anticipated comic book movie

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The truth behind Whedon's
troubled new show

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beams down to save
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Guitar Hero Metallica
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FREE TO JOIN.
FREE TO PLAY.

PlayStation
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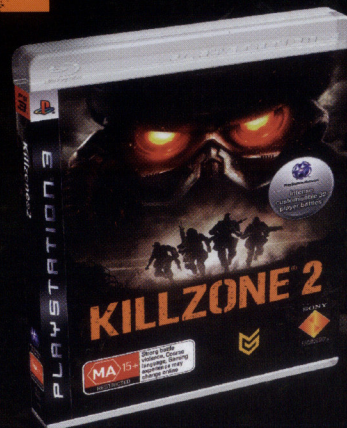


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PLAYSTATION 3

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